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# THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

WITH COMMENTARY

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DEUTERONOMY

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## DEUTERONOMY

WITH COMMENTARY

BY

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## FOREWORD

The Jewish Publication Society takes pleasure in presenting herewith the second volume of a series of commentaries on the books of the Bible. The first volume, the Book of Micah with commentary, by Max L. Margolis, was published in 1908. It is planned to issue additional volumes of the commentaries series in the future.

The series is intended for the teacher, the interested pupil and the general reader, and the commentaries are therefore written in as simple and popular a form as is consistent with clearness and accuracy.

Moreover being intended for the Jewish reader, it emphasizes the Jewish point of view and draws more largely than do the general commentaries on the traditional interpretations found in the classical Jewish literature of medieval and modern times.

The recent discoveries, linguistic, literary and archaeological are taken account of.

The translation follows the English version of the Jewish Publication Society.



## PREFACE

The present Commentary on Deuteronomy reflects in the main, though not in every detail, the traditional point of view concerning the origin and composition of the Pentateuch. While acknowledging some of the positive results of the modern historical-critical school, such as the elucidation of biblical history and literature through the contemporary history and literature of the Ancient Orient, the author does not accept the so-called higher criticism of Graf, Kuenen, and Wellhausen, especially the source theory or documentary hypothesis, according to which the Pentateuch is made up of various sources or documents of different age. He believes with many other scholars that the case for the documentary hypothesis has not been proved, and he is encouraged in his belief by the recent archaeological discoveries in the Near East, which tend to corroborate the authenticity and genuineness of the biblical text. The evidence for this assertion is adduced partly in the introduction and partly in the commentary; for further elaboration and substantiation along comparative lines see "The Origin of Deuteronomy" in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, XXVII (1936-1937), 349-371.



It is with a sense of pleasure that the author wishes to record his sincere gratitude to Dr. Cyrus Adler, who as Chairman of the Publication Committee of the Jewish Publication Society was instrumental in entrusting him with the present task. He hopes that the result of his labor will not disappoint the expectations of those who placed their confidence in him.

J. R.

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## INTRODUCTION

### TITLE

The fifth book of the Pentateuch is known as דְּבָרִים meaning "words", in accord with the opening phrase: "These are the *words* which Moses spoke unto all Israel beyond the Jordan". The English name Deuteronomy, meaning "repetition of the law," is based on a mistranslation of the Hebrew phrase מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת in 17.18, which goes back to the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch. The correct rendering of that phrase is "a copy of this law", not "this repetition of the law" ("this Deuteronomy" in Greek). The English, or rather Greek, title could be applicable only if the term תּוֹרָה be taken as meaning a particular law or even code of laws, but never with reference to the whole of the fifth book of the Pentateuch.

### CONTENTS

The contents of the fifth book of the Pentateuch are as follows:

1.1–5. Preface, indicating the place and time of the following discourses of Moses.

1.6–4.40. Introductory discourse, hortatory in character, containing a historical retrospect of the wanderings of the Israelites from the mountain of Horeb or Sinai to the land of Moab, facing the promised land. Allusion is made to the various incidents attending this perilous journey

through the desert and past the territory of hostile neighbors, and emphasis is laid upon the circumstance that the preservation of the Israelites in their hours of tribulation was due entirely to divine providence. In conclusion an appeal is made to the people to observe the statutes and ordinances of God, their sole Savior and Benefactor.

4.41-43. A brief statement about setting aside three cities of refuge on the other side of the Jordan.

4.44-49. The following exposition of the Law by Moses is announced under the triple heading of testimonies, statutes, and ordinances.

Chapters 5-26. Chief discourse, opening with an exposition of the Ten Commandments and developing particularly the first commandment at great length (ch. 5-11). This section, hortatory in character and interspersed with a historical retrospect, is followed by the Deuteronomic Code of Laws, containing the special laws or statutes and ordinances which supplement the Ten Commandments (ch. 12-26). These statutes and ordinances are of a triple character, ceremonial, civil, and criminal.

#### I. CEREMONIAL OBSERVANCES:

1. Law of a central place of worship (12.1-28).
2. Injunction against idolatry (12.29-13.19; 16.21-17.7).
3. Holiness of the people: clean and unclean food (14.1-21).
4. Tithes (14.22-29).
5. Remittance or Release (15.1-18).
6. Setting aside firstlings as holy (15.19-23).
7. Holy seasons (16.1-17).

## II. CIVIL ORDINANCES:

1. Appointment of judges and a supreme central tribunal (16.18-20; 17.8-13).
2. Election of a king (17.14-20).
3. Regulations concerning the rights and revenues of priests and Levites (18.1-8).
4. Rules concerning prophets (18.9-22).

## III. CRIMINAL LAWS:

1. Cities of refuge for the manslayer (19.1-13).
2. Encroachment on property (19.14).
3. False testimony (19.15-21).
4. Conduct of war (20.1-20).
5. Expiation of an undetected murder (21.1-9).
6. Crime punishable by hanging (21.22-23).

IV. MISCELLANEOUS LAWS PERTAINING TO  
FAMILY AND PROPERTY:

1. Marriage with a female captive (21.10-14).
2. Right of primogeniture (21.15-17).
3. Disobedient son (21.18-21).
4. Kindness to animals, etc. (22.1-4, 6-8).
5. Prohibition of various mixtures (22.5, 9-11).
6. Twisted cords on garments (22.12).
7. Punishment of unchastity (22.13-29).
8. Exclusion from the congregation (23.1-9).
9. Ritual cleanness in the camp (23.10-15).

10. Runaway slaves (23.16–17).
11. Against temple-prostitutes (23.18–19).
12. Exaction of interest (23.20–21).
13. Concerning vows (23.22–24).
14. Use of a neighbor's fruit and corn (23.25–26).
15. Remarriage after divorce (24.1–4).
16. Exemption of newly-married men from war-service (24.5).
17. The necessities of life should not be taken in pledge (24.6, 10–13, 17–18).
18. Man-stealing (24.7).
19. Leprosy (24.8–9).
20. Payment of wages (24.14–15).
21. Responsibility of parents for children and vice versa (24.16).
22. Justice and charity to strangers, orphans and widows (24.17–22).
23. Against excessive punishment (25.1–3).
24. Against muzzling the laboring ox (25.4).
25. Levirate marriage (25.5–10).
26. Indecent assault (25.11–12).
27. Divers weights and measures (25.13–16).
28. Extermination of Amalek (25.17–19).

Chapter 26 constitutes a parenetic conclusion to the special laws.

Chapter 27. Injunctions concerning the acceptance of these statutes and ordinances by the people on their arrival in Canaan.

Chapter 28. Declaration of blessings and curses which will overtake the people if they observe or neglect the prescribed statutes and ordinances.

29.1–30.20. Supplementary discourse, exhorting the people to accept the terms of the new covenant and promising them forgiveness in case of sin, if attended by whole-hearted repentance.

31.1–8. Moses' farewell to the people and Joshua.

31.9–13. Moses' delivery of the Law to the Levitical priests, with instructions to have it recited publicly every seven years.

31.14–15. Commission of Joshua.

31.16–30. Introductory remarks to the Song of Moses.

32.1–43. Song of Moses.

32.44–47. Concluding remarks to the Song of Moses.

32.48–52. Moses is ordered by God to ascend mount Nebo and die there.

Chapter 33. Blessing of Moses.

Chapter 34. Death of Moses on mount Nebo in the land of Moab and Joshua's accession as leader of Israel.

The division into chapters did not originate with the Jews, but came to them in the late Middle Ages through Christian channels. For liturgical purposes the books of the Pentateuch are divided into sections known as *Parashiyyot* to the Spanish-Portuguese and *Sidrot* to the German Jews, which are named after the first striking word of each section and recited publicly on successive Sabbaths of the year. The Book of Deuteronomy is divided into eleven such sections, as follows: 1.1–3.22; 3.23–7.11;



7.12–11.25; 11.26–16.17; 16.18–21.9; 21.10–25.19; 26.1–29.8; 29.9–30.20; 31.1–30; 32.1–52; 33.1–34.12. They are read on successive Sabbaths during the months of Ab and Elul, the last section on the Feast of Simhat Torah which falls on the ninth day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

### AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

Ancient Jewish tradition maintains that Moses was the author of all the five books of the Torah (the Pentateuch), with the exception of the last eight verses of the Book of Deuteronomy describing the demise of Moses on mount Nebo<sup>1</sup>. Modern critical opinion impugns this tradition as spurious, claiming that the so-called five books of Moses are not at all the work of Moses, but are made up of various sources or elements, which are designated as Jahweh, Elohim, Deuteronomy, and Priestly Code (briefly J, E, D, P) and which are supposed to have been dexterously put together in their present composite form by a late editor<sup>2</sup>. This whole problem has been dealt with briefly and concisely by the late Professor Max L. Margolis in his booklet, *The Hebrew Scriptures in the Making*<sup>3</sup>, to which the reader is referred. Here the discussion is necessarily limited

<sup>1</sup> Babylonian Talmud, B.B. 14b: משה כתב ספרו ופרשם בלעם ואיוב יהושע כתב ספרו ושמונה פסוקין שבחורה "Moses wrote his book (meaning the Torah) and the section dealing with Balaam and the Book of Job, Joshua wrote his book (meaning the Book of Joshua) and eight verses of the Torah (meaning Deut. 34.5–12)".

<sup>2</sup> Comp. any modern introduction to the literature of the Old Testament, but especially that of S. R. Driver, New York, 1914.

<sup>3</sup> Published by the Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1922.

to the fifth book of the Pentateuch only, the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Book of Deuteronomy possesses certain special characteristics which from time immemorial led Bible students to class it as a book by itself and apart from the other books of the Pentateuch<sup>4</sup>. Both in form and contents it differs from the preceding books of the Torah. In form it is an address by Moses to the people of Israel. The speech has a very intimate and personal ring, is hortatory and parenetic throughout, and reminiscent of the lofty style of the literary prophets. In content, it enunciates a new conception of religion, grander and nobler than any known to have existed theretofore, perhaps the highest in the entire Bible. According to this conception, there is but one God, supreme master of the universe, all-observing but invisible, all-comprehending but incomprehensible, just but compassionate, faithful to His people and loving those who worship Him. This God, who tolerates no other gods beside Him, is to be worshiped wholeheartedly by every Israelite, who may also offer sacrifices to Him at one central and fixed place chosen by Him to put His name there. Idolatry, divination, sorcery, and similar pagan practices are strictly prohibited. Further, in the relations between man and man, as between man and God, the guiding principle is love, with its concomitant virtues, humanity and charity.

<sup>4</sup> Already Jerome became aware of the peculiar characteristics of the Book of Deuteronomy, urging its identity with the Book of the Covenant discovered in the Temple in the eighteenth year of King Josiah (II Kings, chapters 22 f.). See further below.

These advanced ideas about human conduct, which somehow appear to be inconsistent with the practices met with in the earlier books of the Pentateuch, have prompted the claim of scholars, ancient and modern, that the Book of Deuteronomy is a later product and could not have been composed by Moses. Casting about for an author and date, they alighted upon the narrative in II Kings, chapters 22 f., concerning the discovery of a Book of the Law, or Book of the Covenant, in the Temple in the eighteenth year of king Josiah (621 B.C.E.)—a discovery which led to an important reform in the Hebrew ritual—and proceeded to identify the Book of Deuteronomy with this Book of the Covenant. The chief reasons for this identification are as follows:

1) The book discovered by Hilkiah the high priest in the Temple was recited by Shaphan the scribe twice in one day, once in the Temple and another time in the palace before the king. Hence it could not have been the whole Torah or Pentateuch, as claimed by tradition, but only a part thereof. 2) The Book of Deuteronomy is the only book of any length to which the title "Book of the Covenant" could be applied, comp. 5.2; 28.69; 29.20, and 30.10. The only other Book of the Covenant that might be considered, Exodus, chapters 20–23, is too short for the purpose. Hence the conclusion that Deuteronomy chapters 12–26 is an enlarged edition of Exodus, chapters 20–23. 3) The reforms introduced by Josiah as a result of the discovery of the Book of the Covenant appear to be based exclusively on the Book of Deuteronomy: Thus centralization of the

cult in II Kings 23.8 ff. goes back to Deut. chapter 12; abolition of star-worship in II Kings 23.11 f. goes back to Deut. 17.3; suppression of Sodomites in II Kings 23.7 is based on Deut. 23.18; prohibition of sorcery in II Kings 23.24 is based on Deut. 18.10 ff.; prohibition of child sacrifice in II Kings 23.10 follows Deut. 18.10; celebration of the Passover in the Temple, II Kings 23.21 ff., follows Deut. 16.1 ff.

These arguments were reinforced by other considerations, such as that the conception of God and religion in the Book of Deuteronomy is derived from the prophets of the eighth century (Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah), and that its language and style are typical of the seventh century, finding their closest resemblance in the Book of Jeremiah.

Accordingly, it would seem that the Book of Deuteronomy is a product of the latter half of the seventh century. Indeed, this was the view of Wellhausen and his school, who maintained that the book was composed by a contemporary of Josiah, either with or without the knowledge of Hilkiah, that it represents a compromise between the reactionary priests and the progressive prophets, and that the discovery in the Temple was only a pretence intended to incline the king to the reform movement. Or, it is argued by a more moderate wing of this school, the Book of Deuteronomy was composed during the reactionary reign of Manasseh (693–639), by one of the persecuted prophets, who comforted himself by rewriting the old law in the new prophetic spirit and casting it in the form of a hortatory address by Moses himself.

However, this radical view, formidable at first glance, is finding less and less acceptance. While it is true that some of Wellhausen's followers continue to uphold his hypothesis of a late date, and Hölscher, for instance, even goes to the length of assuming that the Book of Deuteronomy is not the instrument but rather the product of Josiah's reform in 621, sane critical opinion, which is becoming more and more articulate, is to the effect that the Book of Deuteronomy contains a very ancient nucleus, incorporated in the so-called Deuteronomic Code of chapters 12-26, which probably goes back to the times of Moses and the Judges, and that this nucleus received various additions and supplements in later years, among them being the law of the centralization of the cult with all its implications. This, for example, is the view of Professor Ernest Sellin<sup>5</sup>. Other independent scholars, like Oestreicher<sup>6</sup> and Welch<sup>7</sup>, place the bulk of the Book of Deuteronomy long before the age of Josiah. Welch's theory in particular deserves mention. According to him, the Code of Deuteronomy (chapters 12-26) constitutes the code of northern Israel, just as the so-called Law of Holiness in the Book of Leviticus constitutes the code of southern Judea; it originated at a very early date, probably in the time of the Judges and Samuel, and its aim was not a single center, as is generally assumed, but

<sup>5</sup> *Introduction to the Old Testament*, New York, 1923, pp. 73 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Das Deuteronomische Grundgesetz*, Gütersloh, 1923.

<sup>7</sup> *The Code of Deuteronomy. A New Theory of its Origin*. London, 1924. Comp. also his recent book, *Deuteronomy. The Framework to the Code*. Oxford, 1932.

several well recognized places for the worship of God, as distinct from the numerous altars for Baal worship. An early date for Deuteronomy is further required by the archaeological discoveries of recent years, and the distinguished archaeologist William Foxwell Albright does not hesitate to state that in his judgment the book was written down, substantially as a unit, in the ninth century and was edited in the reign of Josiah or later<sup>8</sup>. To Albright, as to Welch, Gressmann and others, the most natural explanation is that Deuteronomy represents a selection from the religious and family legislation of the region of Shechem, in so far as it was believed in the ninth century to go back to Moses.

The orthodox standpoint that Moses was the author of the Book of Deuteronomy, as of the other books of the Pentateuch, is still being stressed by a number of scholars, notably by Harold M. Wiener<sup>9</sup>, Max Löhr<sup>10</sup>, Wilhelm Möller<sup>11</sup>, A. Troelstra<sup>12</sup>, and A. Šanda<sup>13</sup>. The latter stoutly maintains that the political background of the Book of Deuteronomy is the same as that of the Mosaic age,

<sup>8</sup> *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, New York, 1932, p. 155.

<sup>9</sup> *Pentateuchal Studies*, Oberlin, Ohio, 1912, pp. 170 ff.; but particularly in an article entitled, "The Main Problem of Deuteronomy", published in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, LXXVII (1920), 46-82.

<sup>10</sup> *Untersuchungen zum Hexateuchproblem. II. Das Deuteronomium*. Berlin, 1925.

<sup>11</sup> *Historisch-kritische Bedenken gegen die Graf-Wellhausensche Hypothese*, Gütersloh, 1899; but particularly in his ambitious work, *Die Einheit und Echtheit der 5 Bücher Moses*, Bad Salzungen, 1931.

<sup>12</sup> "Deuteronomy", in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, LXXXI (1924), 393-409.

<sup>13</sup> *Moses und der Pentateuch*, Münster, 1925.

pointing out the attitude towards the Idumeans and Egyptians (23.8), the treatment of the Ammonites and Moabites (23.4 ff.), the omission of any mention of the Philistines (7.1) or the division of the kingdom, etc. He further stamps the characteristic laws of Deuteronomy (such as *Shemittah* or release, provision for kings, appointment of lay judges, court of appeal, appointment of officers by the people, freeing of newly-weds from military service, prohibition of interest on loans, etc.) as "practically unrealizable tasks of a desert theoretician".

It is justly claimed by this orthodox or conservative school that the Book of the Covenant found in the Temple during the reign of Josiah was nothing more nor less than our Torah or Pentateuch, which in the earlier reactionary reign of Manasseh must have been consigned to entombment on the occasion of alterations in the Temple. This is borne out by the fact that when the high priest Hilkiah informs Shaphan the scribe of the discovery in the Temple, he says: "I have found *the* book of the Law" (ספר התורה with the definite article, II Kings 22.8). Evidently the high priest had previous knowledge of its existence, although he may have been unable to lay his hand on it. It is also apparent from the readiness with which the king accepted the Law read out to him that he was not unaware of its existence. This does away with the imputation of a pious fraud perpetrated by the high priest in order to sway the king and the people towards a contemplated reformation. But, apart from this, the rebuttal to the arguments of the Wellhausen school is as

follows: 1) Although it is not impossible that the whole Torah was recited twice in one day, such an assumption is wholly unnecessary, since it is more plausible to assume that only certain selections were recited (such as important legal codes, blessings and curses, etc.). 2) The term "Book of the Covenant", like "Book of the Law", is quite applicable to the entire Pentateuch. 3) It is not altogether true that the abuses removed by Josiah are dealt with exclusively in Deuteronomy: Thus the putting down of the worship of Baal and other gods, including sun, moon, and heavenly constellations, may allude to the Second Commandment (Ex. 20.3); the pillars which were broken down are proscribed in Lev. 26.1; the Sodomites are alluded to *ibid.* 18.22, similarly the Molech worship by causing children to pass through the fire (20.2 ff.) and divining by a ghost or familiar spirit (19.31; 20.6, 27); the word גלולים for "idols" occurs *ibid.* 26.30; finally the celebration of the Passover is enjoined in all the codes of the Torah. As to the law of a central sanctuary, which is claimed to be characteristic of the Code of Deuteronomy and evidently in conflict with Ex. 20.24, it may be due to changed conditions of life involved in the transformation of nomad tribes to a settled people in Canaan, or it may not be so startlingly new as is generally supposed. In recent years two very competent scholars, Albrecht Alt<sup>24</sup> and Martin Noth<sup>25</sup>, have endeavored to establish

<sup>24</sup> *Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina*, Leipzig, 1930, pp. 10 ff.

<sup>25</sup> *Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israels*, Stuttgart, 1930.



the principle of the amphictyonic origin of the twelve tribes of Israel, that is that they arose as a league of clans, tribes, or towns around one central sanctuary. If this be true, namely that there was one central shrine at the beginning of Israelite history, then the very foundation of the Wellhausen theory falls, and there is nothing in the way of restoring Deuteronomy to its traditional age. "But we will grant that the two Codes disagree. We contend, however, that had the Book of Josiah been confined to the Deuteronomic Code alone, as is generally maintained, it would have met with instant opposition of a nature to preclude acceptance. The priests of the country sanctuaries might have pointed to the Exodus legislation. It was obviously imperative to mark the rival code as repealed. This could be accomplished only by having the two codes in one and the same book. Both were allowed to stand as Mosaic; only the Exodus Code was dated from the beginning of the wanderings, it was given at Sinai (Horeb), while the Deuteronomic Code was the final legislation set forth in the plains of Moab. Where they differed, the Second Law was manifestly in force. A body of narrative became necessary to indicate that there was a sequence in time. Hence the two Codes must have been encased in a framework of history, which, of course, means that Josiah's Book resembled our Pentateuch"<sup>16</sup>.

With regard to the contention that the conception of God and religion in Deuteronomy is too advanced to

<sup>16</sup> Max L. Margolis, *The Hebrew Scriptures in the Making*, pp. 106 ff.

belong to the Mosaic age, it is pointed out by many scholars and students of religion that a high stage of religious and even ethical development does not necessarily imply a late date, and that in the history of religion monotheism may precede henotheism and polytheism. At any rate, Mosaic monotheism, which is stoutly denied by the Wellhausen school, is almost necessitated by what we now know of the contemporary religion of the neighboring nations. "A priori, we should expect that Israelite monotheism would come into existence in an age when monotheistic tendencies were evident in other parts of the ancient world, and not at a time when no such movements can be traced. Now, it is precisely between 1500 and 1200 B.C.E., i. e. in the Mosaic age, that we find the closest approach to monotheism in the ancient Gentile world before the Persian period".<sup>17</sup> The same holds true of the ethical and social prescriptions of Mosaism, which no longer stand alone in the ancient Orient but have their counterpart in Egypt, Babylon, etc. It is probably true that these religious and ethical principles found their most potent expression through the great literary prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries, but this does not preclude their existence in earlier centuries, even in Mosaic times.

As to the argument from style, it is really not so cogent as it appears to be at first glance. The style of a writer

<sup>17</sup> W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, pp. 163 ff. The author compares the Aton movement in Egypt, the Marduk cult in Babylon, and so on.

is almost always conditioned by the subject of his composition, and the smoothly flowing and thoroughly elastic style of Deuteronomy is due partly to its personal character and partly to its hortatory periods, which lend themselves easily to close texture and interweaving of words and phrases. With reference to the stock of words, there is hardly anything in it to indicate a decidedly late date, while many words and phrases admittedly are of a very early period (as, e. g., epicene *הוא* *הוא* for *הוא* *הוא*, *נער* for *נער*, *נער* for *נער*, etc.). Some of the ritual terms and practices mentioned in Deuteronomy may now be traced as far back as the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., the established date of the recently discovered Ras Shamra documents. As pointed out by Theodor Herzl Gaster<sup>18</sup>, the Ras Shamra texts, dated about 1400 B.C.E., contain the following ritual terms: *shelem* or peace-offering, *asham* or trespass-offering, *nph* or *tenuphah*=wave-offering, *kalil* or whole burnt-offering, *kdmt* or first-fruits-offering (already known from Phoenician inscriptions), *'asr*=biblical *ma'aser*=tithe, *kohen*=soothsayer rather than priest, *enash elim*, "man of God", corresponding to the biblical Levites, *ba'alat bhitm*, "lady of the chapels", corresponding to the biblical *kedeshah* or sacred harlot, and, finally, the rite of seething a kid in its mother's milk as a charm to promote dairy-produce, which explains why in Ex. 23.19 and 34.26 the prohibition against this rite is associated

<sup>18</sup> *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, for July, 1934, pp. 141 ff.

with the harvest ritual. Again, if certain expressions are found only in Deuteronomy, that is purely accidental, and is certainly of no chronological significance.

Nor can anyone doubt now the existence of alphabetic writing in Mosaic times, as the Wellhausen school did. Recent discoveries in the archaeological field, such as the Ahiiram inscription of Gebal in Phoenicia, going back presumably to the thirteenth century B.C.E., but particularly the Sinaitic inscriptions and the Ras Shamra tablets, both dating from the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., have demonstrated beyond a shred of doubt that alphabetic writing was universal in the ancient Near East. Hence there is no earthly reason why a highly intelligent person like Moses, or for that matter any professional scribe in his service, could not have used it for the purpose of writing down laws and precepts, or chronicles and genealogical data.

The best and most plausible way of accounting for the Book of Deuteronomy, it seems to the writer, is to say that its bulk originated during the last days of Moses, exactly as stated in its initial preface. The Israelites, standing at the threshold of Canaan, were about to graduate from a nomad herd to a settled agricultural people, and this change necessitated an amplification or modification of the earlier codes of Exodus and Leviticus. The Deuteronomic Code is therefore partly a repetition of former laws in a milder and more humanitarian construction and partly new laws and regulations applicable

to the new conditions of life in Canaan.<sup>19</sup> This new code was naturally set in a historical frame, detailing the circumstances of its origin and promulgation; and just as the code is not quite systematic and orderly, so also the historical frame often lacks precision and strict sequence. As stated in the Talmud, "there is nothing prior or posterior in the Torah" (אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה), for its chief aim is religious and moral, not purely historical. Above all, there is a good deal of repetition: the author stresses the same thought time and again, as if he aimed to inculcate his idea by sheer force of accumulation and reiteration. But this is not unusual in Oriental composition, which as a rule expresses a limited number of ideas in diffuse language. It is true that there are anachronisms and discrepancies here and there (such as the repeated

<sup>19</sup> Of the seventy odd laws prescribed in Deuteronomy, twenty-five are entirely new, not mentioned in the previous codes. These are: seduction to idolatry (through a false prophet, a near relative, or a fellow townsman), 13.2-19; supreme tribunal consisting of the Levitical priests and a superior judge, 17.8-13; law of the king, 17.14-20; law of the prophet, 18.9-22; encroachment on property, 19.14; conduct of war, chapter 20; expiation of an untraced murder, 21. 1-9; treatment of female captives, 21.10-14; right of primogeniture, 21.15-17; body of executed criminal not to be left exposed over night, 21.22 f.; sexes not to interchange garments, 22.5; finding a bird's nest, 22.6 f.; parapets on roofs of houses, 22.8; traducing a newly married woman, 22.13-21; conditions of admittance to the theocratic community, 23.1-8; protection of a fugitive slave, 23.16 f.; against religious prostitution, 23.18 f.; regard for the neighbor's crops, 23.25 f.; divorce, 24.1-4; the family of a criminal not to suffer with him, 24.16; against excessive flogging of a culprit, 25.1-3; prohibition of muzzling a threshing ox, 25.4; levirate marriage, 25.5-10; modesty in women, 25.11 f.; thanksgiving at the offering of triennial tithes, 26.12-15.

“at that time” 2.34; 3.4, 8, 12, 18, 21, 23, and “unto this day” 3.14), but these can very well be explained by the reasonable assumption of later marginal notes and explanatory comments by learned readers, which in course of time, through the well-known vicissitudes accompanying the transmission of manuscripts, had crept into the text itself and became an integral part thereof. Thus some corruptions may be traceable to a number of external causes, such as the change of script from the pointed Phoenician to the square Aramaic, or to the change of form of material from scroll to book, etc. On the other hand, the promiscuous use of singular and plural is a general characteristic of the Bible and cannot be said to point to different sources or authors, as maintained by some commentators. As to passages in the third person found here and there in a book made up of personal discourses, they may be due to a late editor of the original Deuteronomy.

### RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS OF DEUTERONOMY

The spiritual grandeur of Deuteronomy is reflected in the religious and moral doctrines inculcated by its author, whose dominant idea is monotheism, pure and simple. The first commandment of the Decalogue concerning the oneness of God is elaborated at great length through chapters 5-11 to emphasize the fact that there is only one supreme God in the universe, a spiritual being who guides the destinies of men and is solicitous about their welfare. He is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great

God, the mighty, and the awful (10.17), to whom belong the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that therein is (ibid. 14), and there is none else beside Him (4.39). He abhors idolatry and prohibits the making of images, whether of Canaanite gods or of Himself (5.8), forbids the primitive pillars (*mazzebot*) and sacred poles (*asherim*) (12.3). Divination, sorcery, necromancy, and other heathenish practices are strictly prohibited (18.9 ff.). Since multiplicity of altars leads to polytheism, the worship of God is to be performed at one central sanctuary (chapter 12), though this does not have to be located at Jerusalem. Not only are the heathen gods to be exterminated, but also the heathen nations who emulate them, lest Israel follow their example (7.1 ff., etc.). Israel is further enjoined against alliance and intermarriage with the heathen (7.3 f., etc.).

Just as God is pictured as unique, so is Israel represented as distinct, chosen from among all the nations of the earth as God's own treasure and singled out as a holy people unto God (7.6; 14.2; 26.18; 28.9). The dominant relation between God and Israel is that of love: God loved Israel from the beginning (10.15, etc.) and He will continue to love him as long as he keeps His commandment and walks in His path (7.13). Contrariwise He will punish him and shower misfortunes upon him, for He is a jealous God, who does not brook any opposition. He is a God who requites His enemies to the full (7.10), yet a compassionate and forgiving God to those who under His judgments turn to Him again (4.29 ff.).

The love of God for Israel necessitates the love of Israel for God. The outstanding principle of the Hebraic religion is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (6.5). This love for God implies unquestioned obedience to Him and keeping all His commandments, which are not remote and incomprehensible (30.11 ff.), nor difficult and burdensome (10.12 f.). Further, to keep God's commandments is for man's own good (6.24; 10.13).

Religious duties are matched by moral and civil duties. Love of God involves love of one's neighbor and inevitably leads to humanity, justice, integrity, equity, philanthropy and generosity. Thus Deuteronomy urges regard not only for the rights, but also for the needs of the widow, the orphan, the landless Levite, the stranger, etc. The interests of debtors, slaves and hired laborers are carefully guarded, and even animals are given due protection (22.6 f.; 25.4). The principle of personal responsibility is enunciated in the statute: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (24.16).

Thus Deuteronomy teaches a religion of the heart, not one of outward observances. True, ceremonial observances are not rejected (note in particular the celebration of festivals and the elaborate system of sacrifices), but these are only accessory and not essential, finding approval only as serving to discharge the surplus energy of religious fervor. What really matters is a pure, kind heart, and a



clear conscience before God. As stated by Driver: "Nowhere else in the Old Testament does there breathe such an atmosphere of generous devotion to God and of large-hearted benevolence toward men; nowhere else are duties and motives set forth with deeper feeling or with more moving eloquence; and nowhere else is it shown so fully how high and noble principles may be made to elevate and refine the entire life of the community".

### STYLE OF DEUTERONOMY

The Book of Deuteronomy is written in an elegant and easy-flowing Hebrew prose of great charm and beauty, which can hardly be matched in any other narrative part of the Scriptures. The terms and expressions are generally choice, often rare (comp. *מְשָׁלַח יָד*, *תּוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה*, *עַם סִגְלָה*, etc.) and archaic (comp. the epicene *הָאֵל* instead of *הָאֱלֹהִים*, *נָעַר* instead of *נַעֲרָה*, *יָרַח* for *יָרַחוּ*, *זָכוֹר* for *זָכָר*, etc.). The same may be said of certain verbal forms, such as the frequent ending *-un* of the third person plural imperfect. The periods are closely knit together and every clause fits harmoniously in its context. Hence the rolling, undulating sentences of long range and majestic sweep, which stamp the book as a highly finished and thoroughly polished composition, a work that evidently comes from a single hand and is the offspring of a single brain. In the diffuse and discursive treatment, the periods sometimes extend to undue length, particularly in the retrospects, yet they never become altogether monotonous or prolix. The practical aims pursued by the author and the parenetic

treatment of his subject oblige him to expound his discourse at great length and reiterate phrases more than is customary with other Hebrew writers.

This elevated and stately style is more than mere prose, it is full of rhetorical turns and oratorical effects (comp. particularly the rhetorical interrogatives in 1.12 and 10.12), which stamp it with the seal of what is known in the classical languages as artistic prose (comp. Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, Leipzig, 1898). Hence it has been aptly styled prophetic prose in contradistinction to the narrative prose of the other books of the Pentateuch. The style resembles closely that of the prose portions of the Book of Jeremiah. To be sure, this circumstance furnishes to biblical critics one of the reasons for dating our book as late as the prophet mentioned. This is hardly fair, however, since, as a matter of fact, there may be other reasons for the peculiar and striking style of Deuteronomy. In the first place, diction and style are nearly always conditioned by the contents of a book, and the parenetic content and hortatory tone of Deuteronomy inevitably lead to the elevated prose style encountered in our book as well as in Jeremiah. Moreover, the text of Deuteronomy is for the most part in the form of a direct discourse and a personal appeal to the people, all of which lends it an intimate touch and familiar ring common to all subjective writing. Again, it should be emphasized that while the style of Deuteronomy resembles that of Jeremiah, it also resembles portions of Exodus (13.3 ff.; 19.3 ff.; 20.2 ff.; 23.20 ff.; 34.10 ff.), Numbers (5.11 ff.; 6.24 ff.; 11.11 ff.;

14.11 ff.; 33.50 ff.; 35.9 ff.), Joshua, Judges, and Kings (passim). Thus, far from being merely prophetic and late, this elevated prose style may be as early as possible, and even coeval with the earliest phase of Israel's national existence.

### TEXTS AND VERSIONS

The Hebrew text of the Book of Deuteronomy, like that of the Torah or Pentateuch, of which it forms an integral part, has come down to us in a number of manuscripts and printed texts, the characteristic feature of which is that they are all identical and uniform, conforming to one standard text known as Masoretic or traditional, which has been fixed very rigidly about the fifth or sixth century C.E. The earliest manuscript of the Pentateuch, deposited in the British Museum, is of the middle of the ninth century. There are quite a number of Pentateuchs of the tenth and subsequent centuries, scattered in various public libraries in Europe and America. But there is a short fragment of Deuteronomy preserved in the Nash Papyrus, deposited in the Cambridge University Library, which is said by experts to date from the second century C.E. This papyrus of 24 lines contains the Ten Commandments, followed immediately by the opening of the *Shema*' (Deut. 5.6-18 and 6.4 f.), with slight consonantal variations from our Masoretic text, which are probably due to the fact that this text was copied by a scribe from memory for liturgical purposes (comp. Stanley A. Cook in *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*,

XXV (1903), 34 ff., and F. C. Burkitt in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XV (1903), 392 ff.).

The printed text of Deuteronomy, as of the Pentateuch, is based on one of numerous manuscripts, Spanish, German or Franco-German. The first edition of the Pentateuch, with vowels and accents, appeared in 1482 at Bologna; the second edition, with vowels but without accents, in 1487 at Faro, Portugal; the third edition, without vowels and accents, in 1490 at Ixar, Spain; after which the Pentateuch was reprinted frequently, usually with vowels and accents and together with the Five Scrolls, accompanied by Targum Onkelos and the popular commentary of Rashi. At the same time complete Hebrew Bibles began to appear, the first edition, Soncino 1488, the second possibly Naples, 1491, the third, Brescia, 1494, and so on. These were followed by the *Mikraot Gedolot* or Rabbinic Bible, containing the Scriptural text together with the Masoretic notes, the various Targumim and the leading biblical commentaries. The first edition of this elaborate Bible in 4 volumes appeared in Venice 1517–1518, but this was very far from perfect; it was superseded by the excellent second edition, revised by Jacob ben Hayyim ibn Adoniyah, Venice, 1525. This scholarly edition became the standard for subsequent editions of the Rabbinic Bible (Venice, 1546–48; ib. 1568; ib. 1617–19; Basle, 1618–1619; Amsterdam, 1724–1728; and so on).

Of paramount importance as a witness to the Hebrew text is the Samaritan Pentateuch, which goes back to the

Samaritan schism in the fifth century B.C.E. This Pentateuch, while agreeing in the main with the Masoretic text, differs from the latter in some important particulars, but a close scrutiny will convince any one that most of these variants are due to a well-planned recension embodying the views and doctrines of the Samaritan sect, in other words that the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch had been doctored by a Samaritan editor for the purpose of justifying and giving divine sanction to their diverging religious tenets, as in the case of the reading גִּרְיִים for עִבְלִים in Deut. 27.4.

As to versions, the most important are the Aramaic version known as the Targum Onkelos and the Greek version of Alexandria known as the Septuagint. The former, reputed to have been produced in Palestine at the time of Rabbi Akiba, exhibits in the main a marked fidelity to the wording of the original, though not at the cost of intelligibility; only here and there the literal rendering is given up so as to inculcate a legal point, and in the poetic passages the text is somewhat freely expanded with a view to weaving in a homily of the Rabbis. There is another Aramaic version of the Pentateuch, known as the Targum of Jerusalem or Palestinian Targum (also called Pseudo-Jonathan because it used to be attributed erroneously to Jonathan ben Uzziel, the author of a Targum of the Prophets), but this is of a much later date and, moreover, paraphrastic and aggadic in character, so that it is hardly valuable for the purpose of textual criticism.

The Greek translation or Septuagint, which goes back to the middle of the third century B.C.E., is largely literal, though here and there a freer method of rendition is found. On the whole, it attests to the accuracy of the Hebrew text, from which it differs only in some minor points. A more faithful, in fact slavishly literal, Greek rendering is that of Aquila, a proselyte from Pontus, who worked under Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua during the second Christian century. Only few fragments of his translation have come down to us, but they support entirely the Hebrew consonantal text. Other Greek versions by Symmachus and Theodotion, presumably contemporaries of Aquila, whose work is more polished and is likewise extant in fragments only, also furnish ample testimony to the faithfulness of the Hebrew text.

Mention should be made of two other ancient versions of the Pentateuch, which are of paramount importance. The Syriac version known as the Peshitta, which originated in the second Christian century, combines elegance of style with fidelity to the original, and further embodies elements of interpretation rooted in Jewish tradition. The Latin version known as the Vulgate, which was made by Jerome in the fourth Christian century, is likewise faithful to the original, elegant in style, and also leans heavily on Jewish exegesis.

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The present commentary on Deuteronomy is based on a long line of classical commentators, beginning with the Rabbis of the Talmud and reaching to the most recent expositors of the Scriptures in the twentieth century. Aside from the voluminous Talmud, comments of the Rabbis are naturally found for the most part in the ancient Midrash *Sifre*, which covers the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. The later Jewish commentaries used are collected mostly in the Rabbinic Bible known as *Mikraot Gedolot*, which exists in numerous editions, of which the outstanding is that published at Amsterdam in 1724–28 under the title קהלות משה. There we find the well-known commentaries of Rabbi Solomon Yizhaki (abbreviated Rashi, 1040–1105), Rabbi Abraham ben Meir ibn Ezra (1092–1167), Rabbi Levi ben Gershon (abbreviated RLbG, 1288–1344), Rabbi Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno (1475–1550), etc., besides Targum Onkelos and the notes of the Masorah. The later editions of the *Mikraot Gedolot*, particularly those published at Wilna and Warsaw, contain also the commentary of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman Gerondi (abbreviated RMbN, 1194–1270) and the valuable references to Talmudic-Midrashic comments comprised in the חולדות אהרן by Aaron of Pesaro (flourished in the sixteenth century). In addition, use was made of other prominent Rabbinic expositors, such as Rabbi Solomon ben Meir (abbreviated RSbM, grandson of Rashi, flourished

during the twelfth century), whose commentary on the Pentateuch was edited by David Rosin, Breslau, 1881; Rabbi Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508), whose commentary on the Pentateuch was first published at Venice in 1579 and was subsequently printed together with other commentaries in various editions of the Pentateuch for liturgical purposes; and others. Of modern Jewish commentaries the following were utilized: the famous *Biur*, which originated through Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) and a company of Hebrew scholars, the commentary on Deuteronomy being by Herz Homberg (1749–1841), published first at Berlin in 1783 and reprinted many times; *אדרת אליהו*, a commentary on the Pentateuch, by Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon, Gaon of Wilna (1720–1797), printed at Dubrovna in 1804 and in various editions of the Pentateuch; the commentary on the Pentateuch by Isaac Samuel Reggio (1784–1855), published at Vienna in 1821; the commentary on the Pentateuch by Samuel David Luzzatto (1800–1865), published at Padua in 1871–76; *התורה והמצוה*, a commentary on the Pentateuch in connection with the halakic Midrashim Mekilta, Sifra and Sifre, by Rabbi Meir Loeb Malbim (1809–1879), first published at Bucharest in 1860 and reprinted several times thereafter; *הכתב והקבלה*, a commentary on the Pentateuch by Rabbi Jacob Zevi Meklenburg (1785–1865), first published at Leipzig in 1839 and reprinted several times thereafter; a commentary on the Pentateuch in German by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888), published at Frankfort on the Main in 1867–78 and reprinted several times; *מקרא כפשוטו*, a



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# THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES CALLED DEUTERONOMY

These are the words which Moses spoke unto all Israel **1**  
beyond the Jordan; in the wilderness, in the Arabah, over

## CHAPTER 1.

### 1-5. PREFACE, INDICATING THE PLACE AND TIME OF MOSES' DISCOURSES.

1. *the words*] דְּבָרִים, might also mean speeches or discourses. This being the superscription to the entire book of Deuteronomy, it is not unlikely that all the discourses of Moses found in the book are here implied.

*unto all Israel*] Similarly 5.1; 27.9; 29.1; 31.1, etc. Contrast "unto the children of Israel" in verse 3, used for the sake of variety.

*beyond the Jordan*] Already Ibn Ezra and after him Spinoza pointed out the incongruity of this expression, which is generally employed by people living in Palestine and could not properly be used by Moses, who was then situated in the land of Moab. To Moses the expression, "this side of the Jordan", would have been more appropriate. However, it is claimed by orthodox commentators that the Hebrew phrase עַבְרַן הַיַּרְדֵּן, like its Greek equivalent *Peraea*, had a fixed geographical connotation (comp., e. g., the term *Gallia Ulterior* or *Transalpina*, used by Romans in Gaul for the part lying beyond the Rhine) and designated the trans-Jordanic territory irrespectively of the actual position of the speaker or writer (comp. Gen. 50.10); though 3.20, 25; 11.30; Josh. 5.1; 9.1, and 12.7 would seem to point against this assumption. Another claim is that עַבְרַן does not mean only "beyond" but also "this side", as evidenced by Josh. 9.1; I Kings 5.4, etc.

*Arabah*] Literally "dry or waste land", being a synonym of the preceding מִדְבָּר, meaning "wilderness" in general. The specific term עֲרַבָה was applied to the deep wady or valley through which the river Jordan flows, terminating in the north in the Sea of Galilee and in the south in the Gulf of Akabah. This geographical term is still retained for the southern part of the valley, as far as the Dead Sea, while the northern part thereof now bears the Arabic name *Ghor*, i. e. "hollow" or "depression".

against Suph, between Paran and Tophel, and Laban, and  
 2 Hazeroth, and Di-zahab. It is eleven days' journey from

*over against Suph, etc.]* None of these six sites has been identified with certainty. They are supposed to have been beyond the Jordan, in the steppes of Moab (comp. v. 5), where Moses is said to have delivered his discourses and his farewell to the people of Israel. As a matter of fact some of them appear to have lain on the route of march between mount Sinai and the city of Kadesh (comp. E. H. Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus*, pp. 165 ff.). However, it is not impossible that there were similar sites with identical names in the land of Moab. Anyhow, they need not have been more than temporary camps, like those of the Beduins, hastily gotten up and abandoned after a brief sojourn.

*Suph]* Literally "sedge". Ancient and modern versions render it "Red Sea", as if it were ים סוף. Some commentators identify it with Supha in Num. 21.14, a site near the river Arnon. But none of these interpretations is really satisfactory. Whatever its location, it is most probably the name of a place from which the sea of Suph or Red Sea derived its name.

*Paran]* Probably a locality in the wilderness of Paran (comp. Gen. 21.21; Num. 10.12, etc.) or the modern desert of Tih, which borders the mountains of the Sinaitic Peninsula in the south, the Arabah and part of the Gulf of Akabah in the east, the wilderness of Shur in the west, and the wilderness of Zin in the north.

*Tophel]* Ordinarily identified with Tafil, situated on the way from Kerak to Petra, about 14 miles southeast of the Dead Sea. But this identification is uncertain, owing to different dentals in the two names.

*Laban]* Some consider it identical with Libna, the third station from Hazeroth (comp. Num. 33.20), but its site is unknown.

*Hazeroth]* i. e. encampments. Mentioned in Num. 33.17 f. as one of the camping sites during Israel's wanderings in the desert. Modern Ain el-Huḡera, situated about 36 miles northeast of mount Sinai, was suggested by Burckhardt, Robinson and others. But this identification rests solely on the similarity of the two names and hence is not certain.

*Di-zahab]* i. e. possessing gold. Apparently a mining place productive of gold. It has been identified by Burckhardt with the modern *Minet-edh-dhahab*, situated east of Jebel Musa in the Sinai Peninsula, on the Gulf of Akabah.

2. *Eleven days']* This statement about the distance between mount

Horeb unto Kadesh-barnea by the way of mount Seir.

Sinai, where the Law was given to Israel, and Kadesh-barnea, at the southern border of Palestine, is strikingly verified by modern explorers, comp., for instance, Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, II, 565 ff. Robinson traveled in 1838 from Jebel Musa to Akabah, a distance of about 160 miles, in exactly 11 days.

*Horeb*] i. e. waste, desert. This term for the mountain of God, found already in Ex. 3.1, is used in Deuteronomy (except 33.2) instead of Sinai, and evidently is synonymous with it (so Ewald, who believed Sinai to be the older name of the mountain afterwards called Horeb). Other views are that Horeb was the name of the range and Sinai a prominent peak thereof (Robinson), or that Horeb was a lower part or peak of mount Sinai (Gesenius), or that Horeb was the northern and lower portion of the range while Sinai was its southern and highest point. As to the site of Horeb or Sinai, opinions likewise vary. The oldest tradition locates it in the Peninsula of Sinai, identifying it either with Jebel Serbal in the Wady Feiran (Eusebius and others) or with Jebel Musa further south (Justinian, etc.). Serbal is a solitary, majestic peak, 6712 feet high, but at its foot there is no wilderness corresponding to the wilderness of Sinai. Musa forms the southern end of a ridge of granite formation, extending about two miles from northwest to southeast, is 7363 feet high and is surrounded by valleys and plateaus forming favorable camping ground for a large body of people. In modern times scholars have attempted to locate Sinai also outside the Peninsula of Sinai, as, for instance, on the eastern side of the Gulf of Akabah, near Petra (Sayce), or in the neighborhood of Kadesh, on the western border of Edom.

*Kadesh-barnea*] A fuller name of the site known as Kadesh, which has been identified with modern Ain-Kadis, an oasis situated about 50 miles south of Beersheba (comp. Trumbull, *Kadesh-Barnea*, pp. 238 ff.).

*mount Seir*] A mountain range east of the Arabah, in the territory of Edom, which also stands for the land of Edom (Gen. 32.4, etc.). The word שַׁעִיר means "hairy, shaggy", and it may have been so named owing to its association with Esau, who was hairy (Gen. 25.25). The territory was conquered by Esau's descendants, who dispossessed the Horites, the original inhabitants of these mountains, comp. 2.12. The present statement indicates that the Israelites followed the most easterly road from mount Sinai to Kadesh.



- 3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the  
 4 Lord had given him in commandment unto them; after he had smitten Sihon the king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who dwelt in  
 5 Ashtaroath, at Edrei; beyond the Jordan, in the land of

3. *in the fortieth year, etc.*] This passage fixes the date of the following discourses, which took place during the eleventh month of the last year of the forty years' wanderings of the children of Israel, one month prior to their entrance into Canaan.

*in the eleventh month*] i. e. the month of Ab, or, according to Jewish tradition, the month of Shebat. The Hebrew year, consisting of twelve months, is said to have begun in the autumn down to the end of the seventh century, after which it began in the spring, owing to Babylonian influence, which is responsible also for the names of the Hebrew months. The term עשתי עשר for "eleventh" is a variant of אחד עשר in the preceding verse; comp., for instance, II Kings 24.18 with 25.2, Jer. 52.1 with 39.2, and Ezek. 30.20 with 26.1.

4. *Sihon the king of the Amorites*] The original account of his defeat is given in Num. 21.21-32; comp. also further below, 2.24 ff. The Amorites, of Semitic stock, were some of the native inhabitants of Canaan whom the children of Israel conquered and dislodged from their territory. As is evident from this passage, they occupied also some settlements east of the Jordan as far south as the river Arnon.

*Heshbon*] Modern Hesban, situated about 18 miles east of the Jordan, opposite to Jericho.

*Og the king of Bashan*] The original account of his defeat is found in Num. 21.33 ff. Bashan is a broad and fertile tract of country east of the Jordan, comprised between the river Yarmuk on the south, the Hauran range of volcanoes on the east, and mount Hermon on the north. It was famous for its rich pastures, its fat kine and its stately trees.

*Ashtaroath*] Plural of Ashtoreth, the name of the popular Canaanitish goddess. Apparently this city was an important place of Ashtoreth worship. It has been identified with Tell Ashtara, a mound situated about 15 miles north of Edrei.

*Edrei*] An important city on the southern border of Bashan, about 30 miles east of the Sea of Galilee and 30 miles west of the Hauran

Moab, took Moses upon him to expound this law, saying:

The Lord our God spoke unto us in Horeb, saying: 6

mountains. It has been identified with the modern village of Edre'at or Der'at on the southern edge of the gorge that forms the southern limit of the Hauran range.

5. *took Moses upon him to expound this law*] Literally "took upon him. expounded", an asyndetic construction of two perfects, exactly as in Hos. 5.11 and elsewhere (comp. GKC., § 120g). הוֹאִיל, Hiph'il of a stem יאל, properly signifies "show willingness, be pleased, determine" (also against one's will); בָּאֵר means "make clear, expound, explain", comp. Hab. 2.2, where it is employed for making plain the written characters on tablets.

*this law*] Namely the law (Heb. Torah) which follows, or rather the collection of laws, statutes and judgments which are embodied in Moses' discourses in the Book of Deuteronomy. This characteristic expression occurs some 17 times in our book and seems to refer always to a definite body of laws, the code of laws contained in our book.

#### 1.6-4.40. INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE: HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

Moses details the various experiences of Israel after they left Horeb: 1.6-8, departure from Horeb; 9-18, institution of judges; 19, journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea; 20-25, dispatching of spies; 26-40, disaffection of the people and God's judgment; 41-45, defeat of the people's attempt to enter Canaan from the south; 46, prolonged stay at Kadesh; 2.1-8a, compassing mount Seir; 8b-15, journey through the wilderness of Moab and passing Wady Zered 38 years after leaving Kadesh; 16-25, order to cross Arnon on the border of Moab and attack Sihon king of Heshbon; 26-37, defeat of Sihon; 3.1-7, defeat of Og king of Bashan; 8-22, division of the conquered territory; 25-29, rejection of Moses' prayer to be allowed to cross the Jordan and see Canaan.

#### 6-8. ISRAEL IS ORDERED TO DEPART FROM HOREB.

6. *The Lord our God*] This form of the divine name is characteristic of Deuteronomy and no doubt is meant to express the close bond and intimate relation existing between Israel and God. The tetragrammaton יְהוָה = Yahweh (occurring also in the abbreviated forms Yahu and Yah) is the proper name of the God of Israel, the ineffable

- 7 'Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain; turn you, and take your journey, and go to the hill-country of the Amorites and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the Arabah, in the hill-country, and in the Lowland, and in

name for which the Synagogue substituted *Adonai* meaning "Lord" (or *Elohim*, "God", when preceded by *Adonai*) and which the Christian Church mispronounced Jehovah. Its exact origin and connotation are shrouded in obscurity. Hebrew tradition derives it from the stem *hawah* (archaic) or *hayah* "to be", comp. Ex 3.14 "I am that I am"; but modern scholars have impugned this derivation as implying too advanced a conception of God for a nomad horde. They prefer to derive it from similarly sounding stems denoting "to fall", "to blow", "to strike", "to love", etc. (see Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, II, 199b; Barton, *Semitic and Hamitic Origins*, Philadelphia, 1934, pp. 337 f.). אלהים, a plural noun which may designate also "gods", is here an appellative of God the Omnipotent (the singular is confined chiefly to poetry). Whether this plural form is a remnant of polytheism, as is stoutly claimed by modern scholars, or constitutes merely a plural of eminence, expressing the fullness of powers contained in God, as maintained by orthodox expositors, is difficult to decide. At any rate, in the combination before us, where it accompanies the indubitably monotheistic Yahweh, it must designate God *par excellence*.

*Horeb*] See above on v. 2.

*Ye have dwelt long enough*] Literally "the stay in this mountain is much (or enough) for you", similarly in 2.3; 3.26, etc.

7. *the hill-country of the Amorites*] Meaning the land of Canaan, particularly its southern part, which is mountainous. The Amorites, as pointed out above (v. 4), belonged to the native, pre-Israelitish population of Canaan, and were dispossessed on the arrival of the children of Israel.

*Arabah*] Comp. above on verse 1. The reference here is no doubt to the northern part of the Arabah, the modern Ghor, comprising the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

*the hill-country*] Such of the elevated ground of Canaan as was not included in "the hill-country of the Amorite", hence the central plateau or northern table-land.

*the Lowland*] Hebr. *Shephelah*, the technical expression for the lowland or foot-hills sloping down from the mountain range of Judea towards

the South, and by the sea-shore; the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess <sup>s</sup> the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.'

the Mediterranean Sea. For the extent of the *Shephelah* comp. Josh. 15.33-44, where the cities situated therein are enumerated.

*the South*] Hebr. *Negeb* (meaning "dry land"), likewise a technical geographical term for the southern tract of Judah, the undulating pasture country between the Judean hills and the deserts at the extreme lower end of Palestine. The cities belonging to the *Negeb* are enumerated in Josh. 15.21-32.

*the sea-shore*] Meaning probably the strip of land between the *Shephelah* and the Mediterranean Sea and also the northern coast running towards Acco and Tyre.

*the land of the Canaanites*] The whole of Palestine, comprising all the parts enumerated above.

*Lebanon*] The wooded mountain-range on the northern border of Israel, which is added to complete the description of the country.

*as far as the great river*] i. e. as far as the western border of Mesopotamia, which is enclosed by the river Euphrates on the west and the almost parallel river Tigris on the east. This far-flung line of demarcation, indicated also in 11.24; Josh. 1.4, etc., was a pious wish which was never realized.

8. *Behold*] The imperative הִנֵּה "see" came in course of time to be employed as a mere interjection, like הִנֵּה, hence it is indeclinable and is used both with sing. and plur.; similarly 4.5 and 11.26. On the other hand, the plural is used in Gen. 39.14.

*I have set the land before you*] i. e. I have placed the land at your disposal, I have delivered it up to you. The expression is frequent in Deuteronomy. Note the perfect of confidence, which expresses facts which are undoubtedly imminent and therefore, in the imagination of the speaker, already accomplished (GKC., § 106n; Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 17).

*which the Lord swore unto your fathers*] Comp. Gen. 22.16 f. The promise is made to Abraham in Gen. 12.7; 13.14 f. and 15.18 ff.; to Isaac in Gen. 26.3 f.; to Jacob in Gen. 28.13 f.

9 And I spoke unto you at that time, saying: 'I am not  
 10 able to bear you myself alone; the Lord your God hath  
 multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars  
 11 of heaven for multitude.—The Lord, the God of your  
 fathers, make you a thousand times so many more as ye  
 12 are, and bless you, as He hath promised you!—How can  
 I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden,

9-18. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS TO ASSIST MOSES  
 IN JUDGING THE PEOPLE.

9. *at that time*] A characteristic and favorite expression in these retrospects, denoting not only distant periods but also recent time divisions. In our passage it would seem to designate the end of the sojourn at Horeb or Sinai, of which the preceding verses (6-8) treat. In Ex. chapter 18 this incident of appointing judges to assist Moses occurs before the sojourn at Sinai, comp. particularly *ibid.* 19.1 f. It is not impossible that that chapter is misplaced and should properly follow instead of precede the legislation at Sinai.

*I am not able to bear you myself alone*] Identically the same phrase in Num. 11.14, in connection with the people's demand for flesh to eat. In substance this thought was suggested to Moses by his father-in-law Jethro even before the legislation at Sinai, comp. Ex. 18.17 ff.

10. *as the stars of heaven*] Similarly 10.22 and 28.62, based on the promise made in Gen. 22.17; 26.4, and Ex. 32.13.

*for multitude*] Properly "in respect of multitude" (GKC., § 143e).

11. *The Lord make you, etc.*] This verse, in the form of a concessive clause, is a side remark inserted parenthetically to counteract the preceding complaint about the numerical increase of Israel. Moses makes it clear that he is not averse to the constantly growing numbers of the people, but rather to his own increased tasks and duties, which are overwhelming and superhuman. For a similar wish comp. II Sam. 24.3.

*as He hath promised you*] Namely in Gen. 12.2; 22.17; 26.4 and 24.

12. *How can I myself alone bear*] A rhetorical question for greater emphasis of the idea expressed in v. 9.

*your cumbrance*] or burden, comp. Isa. 1.14. מַשָּׂרָף probably refers to the burden of agency or intermediacy between the people and God.

*your burden*] i. e. the burden of leadership and provisioning of the

and your strife? Get you, from each one of your tribes, 13  
 wise men, and understanding, and full of knowledge, and  
 I will make them heads over you.' And ye answered me, 14  
 and said: 'The thing which thou hast spoken is good for  
 us to do.' So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men, 15  
 and full of knowledge, and made them heads over you,  
 captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and  
 people (comp. Num. 11.11 ff.), which later, in Kibroth-hattaavah, Moses  
 shared with the seventy elders.

*your strife*] i. e. legal disputes among the people themselves and contentions with Moses and God.

13. *Get you*] Properly "give yourselves" or provide for yourselves, so Josh. 18.4.

*from each one of your tribes*] לשבטים signifies here "according to your tribes" or "tribe by tribe", the preformative particle being used in a distributive sense. The people of Israel was divided into twelve tribes (שבטים), named after the twelve sons of Jacob, and each tribe was subdivided into families or closely-knit clans (משפחות), and each family was further subdivided into father-houses or single households (בית אבות). This tribal organization, similar to the amphictyonic league of ancient Greece, probably originated after the exodus from Egypt, during the years of wandering in the Sinaitic desert, when it became necessary to transform an unwieldy horde into a fighting army able to attack well intrenched enemies and blast a path through untrodden regions and insurmountable difficulties. In later years, after the conquest of Canaan and the establishment of the kingdom, the tribal system lost its potency and effectiveness and gradually faded out of existence.

*full of knowledge*] Literally "knowing" (so Septuagint and Targum); the Hebr. ידע, denoting an inherent quality, is passive in form but active in meaning (comp. GKC., § 50 f., and Barth, *Nominalbildung*, § 122c), similarly Isa. 53.3; others take it as a passive participle meaning "known", i. e. known for their probity and ability (Vulgate, Sifre, Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

*heads over you*] The prefix of בראשיכם is the ב essentialia, hence "as your heads" (GKC., § 119i).

15. *and made them heads over you, etc.*] Exactly as Ex. 18.25.

*captains of thousands, etc.*] Hebr. שר is a civil and military title of

captains of fifties, and captains of tens, and officers, tribe  
 16 by tribe. And I charged your judges at that time, saying:  
 'Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge  
 righteously between a man and his brother, and the  
 17 stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons  
 in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike;

indefinite rank. It is interesting to note that although in the earlier periods of their history the Israelites had no rigid military system (standing armies were unknown before the time of David), yet already in the days of Moses they possessed tactical units of 1000, 100, 50, and 10, each under its proper officer, head or captain.

*officers*] שֹׁטְרִים, derived from a Semitic root whose primary sense, according to Nöldeke, is "to range in order", denoted originally "arrangers, organizers", then it came to stand for subordinate officials of all sorts, both judicial and military, whose primary function was to execute the orders of their superiors. It is in this sense that the term is used in the Bible.

16. *judges*] The Hebrew term for judge, שֹׁפֵט, is quite ancient and seems to have been common to most Semitic languages. The *shophet* was a civil magistrate with authority to adjudicate disputes and controversies arising between man and man. Only in the Book of Judges does the word *shophet* appear in a larger sense of political ruler of a people or governor of a tribe.

*hear the causes between your brethren*] Literally "hear between your brethren", i. e. listen patiently to the arguments of both sides.

*and judge righteously*] Literally "and judge righteousness", i. e. render a judgment of righteousness or righteous judgment, comp. 16.18.

*the stranger*] גֵּר means a non-Israelite settled in the land of Israel, as distinguished from a foreigner who merely visits the land or stays there for a brief space of time. The *ger*, while not a full citizen, had equal rights and duties with the natives in matters of justice and equity, though not in religious and ritual practices.

17. *Ye shall not respect persons in judgment*] Literally "recognize faces", i. e. pay undue attention to certain people; similarly 16.19.

*ye shall hear*] Note the archaic ending *in* in שִׁמְעוּ not infrequent in Deuteronomy.

*the small*] i. e. the humble and lowly, who lack influence.

*the great*] i. e. the rich and mighty, possessing great influence.

ye shall not be afraid of the face of any man; for the judgment is God's; and the cause that is too hard for you ye shall bring unto me, and I will hear it.' And I com- 18  
manded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

And we journeyed from Horeb, and went through all 19  
that great and dreadful wilderness which ye saw, by the way to the hill-country of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. And 20

*for the judgment is God's]* The judgment concerns God, hence the judge need not fear any human being, for God will surely see to it that no harm befall him for being fair and impartial in his judgment. The same idea recurs in II Chron. 19.6.

*the cause that is too hard for you]* Meaning probably complicated cases and involved litigation for which there was no precedent or fixed regulation.

### 19. JOURNEY FROM HOREB TO KADESH-BARNEA.

19. *we journeyed]* Properly "set out". יָצָא meant originally "pull out tent-pegs", i. e. break camp, set out, and only later it came to denote "journey, march by stages".

*that great and dreadful wilderness]* The reference is to the wilderness of Tih, north of mount Sinai, which apparently left very bad memories in the mind of the Israelites; comp. the same reminiscence in 8.15, where this wilderness is described more fully as the abode of serpents, fiery serpents and scorpions, and also as a waterless waste. On the Tih desert comp. Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus*, pp. 284 ff.

*by the way to the hill-country of the Amorites]* i. e. by the road leading across the wilderness to the south of Canaan. According to Trumbull (*Kadesh-Barnea*, pp. 80 ff.), the road followed by the Israelites after leaving mount Sinai branched off from the mount Seir road a little north-west of Akabah and circled round the base of mount Araif en-Naka. On the hill-country of the Amorites see above on v. 7.

*Kadesh-barnea]* Comp. above on v. 2.



- I said unto you: 'Ye are come unto the hill-country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God giveth unto us.  
 21 Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee; fear not, neither be dismayed.'  
 22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said:

20-25. DISPATCHING OF SPIES TO  
 RECONNOITER THE PROMISED LAND.

20. *the hill-country of the Amorites*] Comp. above on v. 7.  
*the Lord our God*] See above on v. 6.  
*giveth unto us*] More correctly "is about to give unto us", the participle here expressing future time which is pictured as already beginning (comp. Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 168). The phrase is frequent in Deuteronomy, see 2.29; 3.20; 4.40; 5.16, etc.

21. *Behold*] See above on v. 8.

*hath set*] Perfect of confidence, see above on v. 8.

*thy.....thee*] The change from plural to singular and vice versa is quite frequent in the Scriptures, and particularly in Deuteronomy, sometimes taking place even within the limits of a single sentence, comp., e. g., 4.25, 29, 34; 12.5, 7, 9, etc. Presumably it was done for the sake of variety, and under no circumstances should it be construed as introducing a different source or a different author, as claimed by some modern commentators.

*go up, take possession*] viz. immediately (Sifre). The asyndetic construction of the phrase (GKC., § 110h) points to the easiness of the undertaking: all you have to do is to go up (from the low Arabah to the hill-country of the Amorites), and at once you will take possession of the country.

*hath spoken*] Comp. above v. 11.

*neither be dismayed*] נִחַם, derived from נָחַם "be shattered, dismayed", is a word limited to poetry and elevated prose.

22. *And ye came near unto me, etc.*] This sentence ascribes the initiative in the sending of spies to the Israelites, while in Num. 13.1 f. it is attributed to God, who commands Moses to do so. This incongruity is made much of by Pentateuchal critics, who think they are justified in attributing the two accounts to two different sources. But

'Let us send men before us, that they may search the land for us, and bring us back word of the way by which we must go up, and the cities unto which we shall come.' And the thing pleased me well; and I took twelve men of 23 you, one man for every tribe; and they turned and went 24 up into the mountains, and came unto the valley of Eshcol,

as a matter of fact the incongruity is only apparent. It stands to reason that the idea of sending spies could not have originated with God, but must have originated with the people, who were afraid and lacked faith in God. Consequently when God says to Moses in Num. 13.2, "Send thou men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan, etc.", He undoubtedly voices approval of a demand made previously by the people, though this fact is not registered in Numbers as being of no primary importance there. Similarly God's approval of the people's demand is omitted in Deuteronomy, probably because it does not suit the hortatory address of Moses, the chief aim of which is to point out the evil thoughts and acts of Israel. One must bear in mind that in his discourses in Deuteronomy Moses is not a chronicler who records all the events and experiences during the forty years' wanderings in the desert, but rather a prophet and moral leader who, surveying the past at the end of his career, singles out certain acts of rebellion and flagrant faithlessness for which he rebukes his charge.

*search the land*] The verb used here, חָפַר, means primarily "to dig", consequently also "unearth, uncover, expose to the eye, explore".

*the land*] i. e. Canaan.

23. *the thing pleased me well*] This approval of Moses necessarily implies the approval of God, as in Num. 13.1 f.

*twelve men of you, etc.*] Comp. Num. 13.2 ff., where the men are enumerated by name.

*one man for every tribe*] Excepting the tribe of Levi, which had no part in the land.

24. *the mountains*] i. e. the hill-country of the Amorites, comp. above vv. 7 and 19.

*valley of Eshcol*] A torrent-valley near Hebron, rich in clusters of grapes (עֲשְׂכֹל = cluster). Comp. Num. 13.22 ff., where the spies are said to have cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes and to have borne it upon a pole between two.

25 and spied it out. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us back word, and said: 'Good is the land which the Lord  
26 our God giveth unto us.' Yet ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God;  
27 and ye murmured in your tents, and said: 'Because the Lord hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to  
28 destroy us. Whither are we going up? our brethren have

*spied it out*] Literally "went about" as spies.

25. *the fruit of the land*] Namely grapes, pomegranates, and figs, as enumerated in Num. 13.23.

*Good is the land*] Comp. the report of the spies in Num. 13.27, "it floweth with milk and honey".

#### 26-40. DISAFFECTION OF THE PEOPLE AND GOD'S JUDGMENT.

26. *Yet*] i. e. in spite of the favorable report of the spies concerning the land.

*but rebelled, etc.*] Comp. Num. 14.1 ff. The reason for the rebellion, as indicated in Numbers and further below, was the faint-heartedness of the spies (except Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh) at the sight of the tall and valiant inhabitants of Canaan, whom they considered gigantic and invincible.

27. *ye murmured in your tents*] Meaning among yourselves, in private. Geiger (*Urschrift*, pp. 290 f.) claimed that the original Hebrew text read באלהיכם "ye murmured against your God", and that the change to באהליכם "in your tents" was made later for the purpose of removing a statement disparaging to Israel.

28. *Whither are we going up*] i. e. to what unknown land are we going up? The expression "go up" is naturally employed here because of the reference to the mountain range of southern Palestine.

made our heart to melt, saying: The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.' Then I said unto you: 'Dread not, neither 29

*greater and taller than we*] The parallel account in Num. 13.28 and 31 has the epithets "fierce and stronger than we". This statement gives the impression that the Israelites were puny and of inferior stature, as compared with the settled inhabitants of Hebron and its vicinity, which might be accounted for by their nomadic state and inferior diet in the desert.

*the cities are great and fortified up to heaven*] While this phrase is hyperbolic to a certain degree, yet there is evidence from recent excavations in southern Palestine that city walls and escarpments were quite high, some elevated as high as 42 feet exclusive of the tower, hence apt to intimidate tent-dwelling nomads on first sight. Comp. Bliss, *A Mound of Many Cities*, pp. 27 ff., and Macalister, *Bible Side Lights from Gezer*, pp. 141 ff.

*sons of the Anakim*] Hebr. עַנְקִי, like its Arabic equivalent, is taken to mean "neck", and the phrase בְּנֵי עַנְקִים is generally interpreted as long-necked, hence tall, men. The Anakim have been connected with the equally obscure Nephilim (Num. 13.33) and Rephaim (Deut. 2.10 f.). Tradition takes all of these terms to refer to a doughty and stalwart aboriginal race settled in the hill-country of southern Palestine. Three Anak families, named Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, are known to have lived in Hebron (Num. 13.22), and others are said to have inhabited some adjacent places (Josh. 11.21.). They were exterminated during the campaigns of Joshua, but a remnant was left in the Philistine cities Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (ibid. 11.22). Modern critical opinion is sceptical of the belief in a race of giants inhabiting ancient Palestine, since this is not corroborated from extra-biblical sources, nor from the numerous excavations made in Palestine. The prevailing belief is that the settled and prosperous inhabitants of southern Palestine looked like giants to the ragged nomads.

29. *Dread not*] The same term, עָרַץ, is found also in 7.21; 20.3; 31.6 and Josh. 1.9, elsewhere only in poetry. In the parallel passage Num. 14.9 the prosy יִרָא is used.

30 be afraid of them. The Lord your God who goeth before you, He shall fight for you, according to all that He did  
 31 for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bore thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye  
 32 went, until ye came unto this place. Yet in this thing ye  
 33 do not believe the Lord your God, who went before you in the way, to seek you out a place to pitch your tents

30. *who goeth before you*] Comp. Ex. 13.21, which states that the Lord went before the Israelites by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire.

*He shall fight for you*] Comp. Ex. 14.14, 25; Deut. 3.22; Josh. 10.14, 42; 23.3, 10. On the emphatic personal pronoun see Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 153.

*before your eyes*] Comp. Ex. 14.31. Moses emphasizes the people's own experience of God's deeds, which is preferable to the report of the spies.

31. *in the wilderness*] i. e. according to all that He did for you in the wilderness, as in the previous verse; comp. Num. 14.22.

*the Lord thy God bore thee*] As expressed in Ex. 19.4, God bore the Israelites from Egypt on eagles' wings. Comp. also Deut. 32.11.

*as a man doth bear his son*] This simile recurs in 8.5. The tense of the Hebrew verb is the imperfect of comparison (GKC., § 107g; Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 38).

*until ye came, etc.*] Similarly 9.7 and 11.5.

*this place*] Namely the valley over against Beth-peor, comp. 3.29.

32. *Yet in this thing*] i. e. God's promise to bring you to Palestine (Rashi); but perhaps the meaning is "in spite of this thing" (construing the preformative in *בדבר* as concessive), the reference being to God's intimate relation to Israel as that of a father to a son (Driver).

33. *who went before you*] See above on v. 30.

*to seek you out a place*] Comp. Num. 10.33, "to seek out a resting-place for them" (said of the ark).

in: in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in the cloud by day.'

And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was <sup>34</sup> wroth, and swore, saying: 'Surely there shall not one of <sup>35</sup> these men, even this evil generation, see the good land, which I swore to give unto your fathers, save Caleb the <sup>36</sup> son of Jephunneh, he shall see it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children;

*in fire by night...and in the cloud by day]* Comp. Ex. 13.21 and Num. 14.14.

*to show you]* לְרֹאֲתֶכֶם (contracted from לְהַרְאֵתְכֶם, comp. GKC., §53a), is evidently a paraphrase of "to give them light" in Ex. 13.21. Some commentators prefer the Kal to the Hiph'il: לְרֹאֲתֶכֶם "that ye might look" (Driver).

<sup>34.</sup> *was wroth]* This expression is used of God also in 9.7, 8, 19, 22 and elsewhere.

*swore]* Comp. the oath in Num. 14 21 ff. and 32.10.

<sup>35.</sup> *even this evil generation]* This phrase is wanting in the Septuagint, hence Dillmann suggested that it is a later gloss to explain that "these men" are not only the spies but the whole adult generation. However, this phrase occurs also in Num. 32.13, hence its authenticity cannot be called into doubt.

<sup>36.</sup> *save Caleb the son of Jephunneh]* Similarly in Num. 14.24. Of the twelve men sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan, only two, Joshua ben Nun and Caleb ben Jephunneh, brought back favorable reports, thus keeping their faith in God and trusting in Moses' leadership. They were both rewarded for their fidelity and steadfastness by surviving the wanderings in the desert and being permitted to enter the promised land, Joshua as the acknowledged leader of the people in place of Moses and Caleb as the chief representative of the tribe of Judah on the important commission appointed by Moses to distribute the conquered land. As his own portion Caleb received the town of Hebron in the hill-country of Judah.

*the land that he hath trodden upon]* i. e. Hebron and its vicinity, comp. Josh. 14.12 ff.

37 because he hath wholly followed the Lord.' Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying: 'Thou  
 38 also shalt not go in thither; Joshua the son of Nun, who standeth before thee, he shall go in thither; encourage  
 39 thou him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Moreover

*he hath wholly followed the Lord*] Literally "hath fulfilled after the Lord", which is interpreted in various ways as meaning "had confirmed the words of the Lord" (Ehrlich on Num. 14.24). The parallel passage in Num. 14.24 reads more consistently "hath followed Me fully", God being the speaker.

37. *Also the Lord was angry with me*] Having stated the circumstances under which the recalcitrant people were prohibited from seeing the promised land, Moses proceeds to mention also the lamentable fact that he too was placed under a similar ban. According to Num. 20.7 ff., Moses was prevented from entering Canaan because of his act of presumption in striking the rock for water. Since this occurred many years after the incident of the spies (the latter is supposed to have taken place in the second year, the former in the thirty-ninth year of the exodus, on Israel's second sojourn in Kadesh), verses 37-38 must be construed as parenthetical and explanatory.

*for your sakes*] i. e. because of the grumbling of the people for lack of water. The same idea is expressed in Ps. 106.32.

*Thou also shalt not go in thither*] Notice the difference between Moses and the people: the former was at least allowed to see the land from a distance, while the latter could not even glimpse it (comp. above v. 35).

38. *Joshua*] Comp. above on v. 36.

*who standeth before thee*] i. e. who waits or attends upon thee as a servant. This phrase is equivalent to the term "Moses' minister" used elsewhere of Joshua (e. g. Num. 11.28 and Josh. 1.1).

*he shall go in thither*] For the appointment and investiture of Joshua comp. Num. 27.18 ff.

*encourage thou him*] Similarly 3.28.

*he shall cause Israel to inherit it*] i. e. the land, the fem. suffix of יחלנה referring to ארץ in v. 36.

your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, and your children, that this day have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. But as for you, turn you, and take <sup>40</sup> your journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red

39. *your little ones, that ye said should be a prey*] Exactly as in Num. 14.31, comp. also *ibid.* v. 3.

*your children*] i.e. the adults who are under 20 and do not form part of the community.

*have no knowledge of good or evil*] Hence are morally irresponsible and cannot be punished for the sins of their fathers. The same idea is found in Isa. 7.15 f.

#### 40-46. DEFEAT OF ISRAEL'S ATTEMPT TO ENTER CANAAN FROM THE SOUTH.

40. *turn you, and take your journey, etc.*] As in Num. 14.25, with very slight and insignificant variations. Comp. above on v. 7.

*into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea*] Very likely no definite road is meant here, the Israelites being directed in a general way to turn back into the wilderness when they were on the point of emerging from it into a settled country. Rashi interprets the verse as a direction to turn backwards to the south of mount Seir and encompass that mountain from west to east. According to Trumbull (*Kadesh-Barnea*, pp. 81, 134, 360 f.), the Red Sea road of the Bible is identical with the pilgrim road of the Egyptian Moslems across the Tih wilderness from Suez to Akabah (so also Sayce). A more recent view by Major C. S. Jarvis, Governor of Sinai, advanced first in *Blackwood's Magazine* for February, 1931, and then in a book entitled *Yesterday and To-day in Sinai*, Boston, 1932, pp. 158-186, is to the effect that the forty years' wanderings of the Israelites took place not in southern but in northern Sinai, within the triangle El-Arish-Rafa-Kosseima, and that the mountain of the Law was Jebel Hellal, thirty miles south of El-Arish. He argues with some cogency that Israel trekked north from Goshen by the coast of the Levant and the Serbonian Bog to Kadesh-barnea, the present Kadeis.



- 41 Sea'. Then ye answered and said unto me: 'We have sinned against the Lord, we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us.' And ye girded on every man his weapons of war, and deemed it a  
 42 light thing to go up into the hill-country. And the Lord said unto me: 'Say unto them: Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your  
 43 enemies.' So I spoke unto you, and ye hearkened not; but ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and were presumptuous, and went up into the hill-country.

41. *Then*] i.e. after I communicated to you the words of God, comp. Num. 14.39.

*We have sinned, etc.*] So Num. 14.40.

*we will go up and fight*] While admitting their sin against God they nevertheless oppose themselves to His express will that they die in the wilderness. Their rebellious nature is shown in this expression: "we ourselves, not our descendants, will go up and fight." But their resolution was too late.

*and deemed it a light thing, etc.*] וְחָזְקוּ is a hapax legomenon and is generally derived from an Arabic root *hāna* which in the fourth conjugation means "deal lightly or heedlessly." The ancient versions were unaware of its exact meaning and made all sorts of guesses: Septuagint, "assembled"; Aquila, "agreed"; Vulgate, "experienced in weapons"; Targum, "began"; Peshitta, "incited yourselves." Similarly rabbinic commentators: Saadya, "hastened"; Ibn Janah, "were shameless"; Rashi and Ibn Ezra, "were ready" (deriving it from the adverb הֵן "behold").

42. *Go not up, etc.*] In Num. 14.41 ff. the same warning proceeds from Moses instead of God. However, there too the warning must be taken as coming from Moses at the behest of God.

43. *ye rebelled, etc.*] Comp. above v. 26. First you rebelled by refusing to go up with God, then you became refractory by daring to go up without God (Hoffmann).

*and were presumptuous*] The stem יָדַע denotes "boil up, seethe, act proudly, presumptuously, rebelliously," either against man or God, comp. 17.13; 18.20, and elsewhere.

And the Amorites, that dwell in that hill-country, came 44  
out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and beat  
you down in Seir, even unto Hormah. And ye returned 45

44. *the Amorites, that dwell in that hill-country*] The Amorites were one of the earliest and most powerful tribes that occupied the hill-country of Palestine in pre-Israelitic times, but with the invasion of the Canaanites their territory was reduced considerably, and in consequence their power was curtailed. In the parallel account in Num. 14.45 we find "the Amalekite and the Canaanite" instead of "the Amorite". Evidently those terms were used by the Hebrews interchangeably as a general designation for the pre-Israelitic inhabitants of Palestine. According to another view, the Amorites are the same as the Canaanites, both being of the same stock, only the former inhabited the highlands and the latter occupied the lowlands along the coast, Amorite being interpreted etymologically as "mountaineer, highlander" and Canaanite as "lowlander" (See Barton, *Semitic and Hamitic Origins*, Philadelphia, 1934, p. 285).

*as bees do*] A very apt simile, as the bee pursues relentlessly anyone who ventures to touch its hive and inflicts its sting upon him (Ibn Ezra).

*and beat you down*] More precisely "crushed you by beating, beat you in pieces," *וּכְחַס* being derived from *כָּחַס* "crush."

*in Seir*] The word *בְּשֵׁעִיר* is lacking in the parallel passage in Num. 14.45. Some of the ancient versions (Septuagint, Peshitta, Vulgate) appear to have read here *מִשֵּׁעִיר*, aptly rendering "from Seir unto Hormah." A graphic change from *ש* to *ס* is not impossible in early Hebrew script. See comment above on v. 2.

*Hormah*] According to Judg. 1.17 its former name was Zephath and it was named Hormah because during the conquest the tribes of Judah and Simeon devoted it to the *herem* or ban. Following Num. 21.3, however, the Israelites under Moses devoted it to the *herem*, in fulfillment of a vow. Its exact site is unknown. Robinson suggested Sufah, the name of a pass leading up from the Arabah to the south of Judah. Palmer, on the other hand, proposed Sebaita, situated about 25 miles north-east of Kadesh-barnea and about 26 miles south-west of Beer-sheba.

45. *And ye returned*] i. e. to Kadesh, where Moses remained with the ark of the covenant (Num. 14.44).

and wept before the Lord; but the Lord hearkened not to  
 46 your voice, nor gave ear unto you. So ye abode in Kadesh  
 many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.

2 Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke unto me; and we compassed mount Seir many days.

*and wept before the Lord*] Evincing penitence and contrition for their rash act.

*gave ear*] יָיִן is denominative Hiph'il of יָאָן "ear."

46. *ye abode in Kadesh many days*] "Many days" is a relative and indefinite term: It may mean a very long time, as in 2.1 where it denotes a period of about 38 years (comp. *ibid.*, v. 14), and it may also signify a very brief period, as in Lev. 15.25, where it apparently comprises only three days. In our passage it cannot denote more than a few months. According to the medieval chronicle *Seder 'Olam* (chapter 8) "many days" here means 19 years, half of the 38 years of wandering in the desert, but this calculation is based on an arbitrary interpretation of the text. Evidently the present sojourn in Kadesh is not the same as that mentioned in Num. 20.1, which took place after the death of Miriam and prior to the sending of messengers to Edom, hence about 38 years later (so RMBN on Num. 20.1 and Ibn Ezra on Num. 20.14).

*according unto the days that ye abode there*] This is an idiom peculiar to the Semitic languages, when the aim of the writer is to be vague and inexplicit. For other specimens of this idiom comp. I Sam. 23.13; II Sam. 15.20; II Kings 8.1.

## CHAPTER 2.

### 1-8a. DEPARTURE FROM KADESH-BARNEA AND CIRCUIT OF MOUNT SEIR.

1. *Then we turned, etc.*] Comp. 1.7.

*into the wilderness, etc.*] See on 1.40.

*as the Lord spoke unto me*] Comp. 1.40 and Num. 14.25.

*we encompassed mount Seir*] i. e. the mountain range east of the Arabah, see on 1.2.

*many days*] i. e. 38 years, as stated below, v. 14. Comp. comment on 1.46.

And the LORD spoke unto me, saying: 'Ye have com- 2-3  
 passed this mountain long enough; turn you northward.  
 And command thou the people, saying: Ye are to pass 4  
 through the border of your brethren the children of Esau,  
 that dwell in Seir; and they will be afraid of you; take ye

3. *long enough*] The same idiom as in 1.6.

*turn you northward*] Having compassed mount Seir above the western and southern border, the Israelites are now directed to turn northward through the eastern border of that mountain range, in the direction of the land of Moab.

4. Here and in verse 29 we are informed that the Israelites passed peacefully through the eastern frontier of the children of Esau and that, moreover, the latter sold them the necessary victuals. This is not in conflict with Num. 20.14 ff., where the Israelites are refused such a passage on the western border of Edom, for the latter event took place a generation earlier, as they were leaving Kadesh. The most natural explanation for the earlier refusal seems to be the fact that the Hebrews were still weak, untrained in warfare and unorganized as a people, hence not to be feared by the Edomites, who could easily resist them from the steep ridges and mountain fastnesses on their western border. But a generation later, when after trying exertions in the desert and long training in camp the Hebrews emerged as a well-organized army of hardened fighters, a force to be reckoned with, the Edomites could ill afford to resist them, especially on their eastern frontier which was not steep enough and therefore not easily defensible against an attack. Indeed, we are told that this time the children of Esau were afraid of the Hebrews. Another explanation is that "the children of Esau that dwell in Seir" are not identical with the Edomites, though closely related to them, and that while the latter refused the Israelites passage through their country, the former drove a bargain with them and for good reasons let them pass through their territory (RSbM, Luzzatto, and others).

*your brethren*] Comp. 23.8, where the Israelites are enjoined not to abhor an Edomite, for he is their brother.

*that dwell in Seir*] See comment on 1.2.

5 good heed unto yourselves therefore; contend not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on; because I have  
 6 given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. Ye shall purchase food of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may  
 7 drink. For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the work of thy hand; He hath known thy walking through

5. *contend not with them*] The Hithpa'el of גרה, followed by the prefix ב, means properly "to excite oneself against, engage in strife with"; so also vv. 9, 19, and 24.

*as for the sole of the foot to tread on*] Similarly 11.24; Josh. 1.3.

*for a possession*] Emphasizing the fact that the children of Esau also (like Moab in v. 9 and Ammon in v. 19), being descendants of the patriarchs like the children of Israel, received their land as an inheritance from God, hence it is theirs by right and inviolable.

6. *Ye shall purchase*] שבר is a denominative verb meaning "buy grain" (so Gen. 41.57; 42.7, etc.), and consequently all food stuffs.

*buy*] The Hebr. root ברה, signifying "to get by trade," occurs also in Hos. 3.2; Job 6.27 and 40.30. It is interesting to note that the conditions described here obtain even today. According to Musil (*Arabia Petraea*, II, 15), nomad Arabs, who spend the winter in the warm Arabah, attempt to cross mount Seir with their herds at the beginning of the summer, seeking fresh pastures on the eastern plateau and in the wilderness of Moab; but the passes of the mountain range are well guarded by the peasant inhabitants, whose object is to obstruct their passage; eventually they agree to let the nomads pass through the edge of the desert, for then they can trade with them and reap some profit from the sale of victuals.

7. *blessed thee*] Already in the wilderness.

*in all the work of thy hand*] i. e. in all thy undertakings, so also 14.29; 16.15; 24.19; 28.12. The reference may be to trade and commerce, cattle raising, or agricultural work, though, as pointed out by RMbN, the Israelites did not engage in any particular pursuit in the desert and all their needs were provided by God through the manna, quail, water, etc.; but possibly this recurrent phrase is an allusion to their previous pursuits in Egypt.

this great wilderness; these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.' So we <sup>s</sup> passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir, from the way of the Arabah, from Elath and from Ezion-geber.

*He hath known*] i. e. hath taken cognizance of it, concerned himself about it, exactly as in Gen. 39.6; Ps. 1.6; Prov. 27.23.

*these forty years*] So 8.2 and 4. The forty years' wanderings in the wilderness were a standing tradition running through the Scriptures, comp., e. g., Am. 2.10; 5.21; Ps. 95.10. *now* is used here as an indeclinable adverb signifying "now, already."

*lacked nothing*] Since God provided them with manna, quail, water, etc.

*8a. from our brethren, etc.*] i. e. from the territory of our brethren.

*the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir*] Comp. above v. 4 and below v. 29.

*from the way of the Arabah*] The reference is to the road leading northward from Akabah on the Red Sea, through the entire length of the Wady-el-Arabah, up to the Dead Sea, where two side roads branch out to Hebron on the west and Kerak on the east. The Hebrews, of course, followed the eastern road on their way to Moab.

*Elath*] A port on the northern end of the Gulf of Akabah, probably so called on account of its abundant palms. It is mentioned in I Kings 9.26 and II Kings 14.22. It has been identified with modern Akabah, the prominent port giving the name to the Gulf of Akabah.

*Ezion-geber*] Another port on the Red Sea, apparently in the vicinity of Elath. Here Solomon built ships (I Kings 9.26) and here some vessels of Jehoshaphat were wrecked (ib. 22.49). Its site is unknown. Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, I, 169 f.) and recently Musil (*Arabia Petraea*, I, 254, and II, 183 ff.), on the theory that the mud flats now constituting the lower end of the Wady-el-Arabah were formerly immersed in the sea, endeavored to identify it with Ain-el-Ghuḍḍyan, an oasis in the Arabah situated some 15 miles north of the Red Sea.

And we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness  
 9 of Moab. And the LORD said unto me: 'Be not at enmity  
 with Moab, neither contend with them in battle; for I will  
 not give thee of his land for a possession; because I have  
 10 given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. — The  
 Emim dwelt therein aforetime, a people great, and many,  
 11 and tall, as the Anakim; these also are accounted  
 Rephaim, as the Anakim; but the Moabites call them

#### 8b-15. ARRIVAL AT THE BORDER OF MOAB

8b. *And we turned*] Comp. 1.7.

*by the way of the wilderness of Moab*] Comp. Num. 21.11. It must be assumed that through the lower stretch of the Wady-el-Hesa, running south-east of the Dead Sea, the Israelites emerged into the great rolling plains of grass or scrub which undulate to the east of Moab (Tristram, *Land of Moab*, pp. 148 and 169). It should be pointed out that the Hebr. מִדְבָּר signifies not only "wilderness, desert," but also any pasture-ground which remains uncultivated. Evidently the eastward trek of the Israelites was for the purpose of avoiding the settled and fertile districts of Moab.

9. *Be not at enmity with Moab, etc.*] Similarly below v. 19.

Ar] One of the principal cities of Moab, also referred to as Ar of Moab (Isa. 15.1), situated on the northern boundary of that land (see below v. 18 and Num. 21.15), on the edge of the Arnon valley (see below v. 36 and Josh. 13.9). Its exact location is unknown (G. A. Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*<sup>3</sup>, p. 559.).

*the children of Lot*] Moab was reputed to be the son of Lot's eldest daughter, comp. Gen. 19.37.

#### 10-12. DATA CONCERNING THE FORMER INHABITANTS OF THE LANDS OF MOAB AND EDM.

10. *The Emim*] Hebr. עִמִּים or עִמִּי is interpreted to mean "terrors" and is applied to the doughty ancient inhabitants of the territory afterwards occupied by the Moabites. According to Gen. 14.5, Chedorlaomer smote them in Shaveh-kiriathaim, i. e. the plain Kiriathaim, a site about 6 miles north of the Arnon.

*as the Anakim*] Comp. comment on 1.28.

11. *these also are accounted Rephaim, as the Anakim*] i. e. the Emim

Emim. And in Seir dwelt the Horites aforetime, but the <sup>12</sup> children of Esau succeeded them; and they destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto

were known also by the name Rephaim, which was likewise a secondary name of the Anakim. The Rephaim (meaning "shades," in the sense of a dead or extinct race?) were an aboriginal race of large stature who in very ancient times dwelt in Palestine, first east and then also west of the Jordan (comp. below v. 20 and 3.11, also Gen. 14.5; 15.20; Josh. 17.15). A remnant of the Rephaim seems to have been left in Palestine after the Hebrew conquest, for "children of the Rapha" are found fighting side by side with the Philistines against the Hebrews under David (II Sam. 21.16 ff.).

12. *in Seir dwelt the Horites aforetime*] Comp. Gen. 36.20 ff. According to Gen. 14.6, these Horites were defeated by Chedorlaomer and his allies. Very little is known about the Horites beyond the fact that they were the primitive population of the hill-country of Seir and were dispossessed by the descendants of Esau. The prevalent theory is that they were troglodytes or cave-dwellers (Hebr. חֹר meaning "hole" or "cave"), traces of whom are believed to exist in the caves and grottoes of rocky Petra in Idumea; comp. Alexander B. W. Kennedy, *Petra its History and Monuments*, London, 1925, pp. 38 ff., also George Livingston, *The Sarcophagus of an Ancient Civilization*, New York, 1930, pp. 316 ff. Macalister (*The Excavation of Gezer*, I, 145 ff.) identified the Horites with the neolithic men discovered at Gezer in southern Palestine, who are supposed to have been short but well developed non-Semites. A. H. Sayce (*Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 204) believed they were white people (חור meaning "white") in contrast to the Edomites who were red. Another more recent theory is to the effect that the Horites were a wave of the Hurri population from Mesopotamia (comp. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*<sup>6</sup>, p. 149, n.1).

*as Israel did unto the land of his possession*] Anticipating the conquest of Canaan, which had not yet taken place. Hence some modern commentators maintain that this passage constitutes a later marginal gloss which somehow had crept into the text. However, the tense used in Hebrew may be explained as a prophetic perfect frequently employed in the Bible instead of the participle or imperfect, comp. GKC., §106n (so Hoffmann).



- 13 them. — Now rise up, and get you over the brook Zered.’  
 14 And we went over the brook Zered. And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, were thirty and eight years; until all the generation, even the men of war, were consumed from the  
 15 midst of the camp, as the LORD swore unto them. More-over the hand of the LORD was against them, to discomfit

13. *Now rise up, etc.*] This verse resumes the narrative of v. 9, which was interrupted by the archaeological data concerning Moab and Edom.

*the brook Zered*] Similarly Num. 21.12. A more correct rendering is wady or torrent-valley, for Hebr. נחל really “signifies the hollow or valley of a mountain-torrent, which while in rainy seasons it may fill the whole width of the depression, in summer is reduced to a mere brook, or thread of water, and is often entirely dry” (A. P. Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine in Connection with their History*, Appendix § 38). The exact location of this wady is disputed. Some think it is the Wady-el-Hesa which runs from the south-east to the south end of the Dead Sea, but, as pointed out above in commenting on verse 8, the Israelites were already in the land of Moab, hence north of that wady which formed the southern boundary of that country. Others take the reference to be to the Wady Kerak, a deep and narrow gorge running past the city Kerak in a north-western direction into the Dead Sea, but, as pointed out by Musil, this wady does not run far enough east to suit the situation. Hence Musil, the latest explorer of the region, prefers to identify Zered with the Wady-es-Sultani, the great southern affluent of the river Arnon (*Arabia Petraea*, I, 316 and 319 note).

14. *thirty and eight years*] The round forty years of Num. 32.13 and Josh. 5.6 include the two years’ wanderings from Egypt to mount Sinai and thence to Kadesh-barnea.

*even the men of war*] This seems to limit the destruction to adult males only.

*as the Lord swore unto them*] Comp. 1.34 f. and Num. 14.21 ff.

15. *Moreover the hand of the Lord was against them*] While some died a natural death, others passed away through all kinds of plagues and tribulations; comp. Num. 16.31 f.; 21.6; 25.3 ff.

*to discomfit them*] Better “rout them in confusion” (Driver).

them from the midst of the camp, until they were consumed.

So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, that the LORD spoke unto me, saying: 'Thou art this day to pass over the border of Moab, even Ar; and when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, harass them not, nor contend with them; for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon for a possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession. — That also is accounted a land of Rephaim: Rephaim dwelt

*until they were consumed*] Literally "until they were finished."

16-25. ORDER TO CROSS THE BOUNDARY OF MOAB  
AND ATTACK SIHON KING OF HESBON.

16. *The men of war*] See above on v. 14.

*were consumed and dead*] Literally "had finished dying," comp. this idiom in Num. 17.28; Josh. 3.17 and elsewhere.

18. *the border of Moab, even Ar*] Hence Ar lay on the northern border of Moab, eastward. See above on v. 9.

19. *the children of Ammon*] The Ammonites are reputed to have been descendants of Ben-ammi, the son of Lot's second daughter (Gen. 19.38). They occupied the territory between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok, which, as seen from next verse, they wrested from the Zamzummim, except a narrow strip along the eastern shore of the Jordan which was in the hands of the Amorites under king Sihon.

*harass them not, etc.*] Similarly above v. 9.

*the children of Lot*] i. e. The Ammonites, see note above.

20-23. DATA CONCERNING THE FORMER INHABITANTS  
OF THE LAND OF AMMON.

20. *That also is accounted a land of Rephaim*] Like the land of Moab the land of Ammon, too, was formerly occupied by the doughty Rephaim, whom the Ammonites called Zamzummim.

- therein aforetime; but the Ammonites call them Zam-
- 21 zummim, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and
- 22 they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead; as He did for the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day;
- 23 and the Avvim, that dwelt in villages as far as Gaza,

*Zamzummim*] The origin of this name, like that of the Emim and Rephaim, is shrouded in obscurity. It has been suggested by modern commentators that this word may have something in common with the Arabic root *zamzam* meaning "to hum, to mumble" (said of magicians), hence *Zamzummim* = whisperers, murmurers, with reference to their speech, which may have sounded as gibberish to the invaders. Comp. the Greek term *Barbaroi*, which was applied to people of uncouth and indistinct speech, or the Russian name *Niemsi* meaning "dumb" applied to the Germans because their speech appeared inarticulate. The *Zamzummim* are generally supposed to be the same as the *Zuzim* in Ham, whom Chedorlaomer smote together with the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim (Gen. 14.5).

21. *a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim*] Identical with the description of the Emim in v. 10.

*the Lord destroyed them before them*] A hint that God is solicitous about the welfare of other tribes and nations besides the Israelites.

22. *as He did for the children of Esau, etc.*] Comp. above v. 12.

23. *the Avvim, etc.*] This is another example of an immigrant people dislodging a native tribe and occupying its territory. Apparently the Avvim were an aboriginal tribe domiciled on the south-western coast of the Mediterranean Sea prior to its occupation by the Caphtorim or Philistines. They are mentioned only once more, in Josh. 13.3, on the side of the Philistines, but nothing is known about their origin or nature. The attempt to identify them with the Amu frequently mentioned in Egyptian inscriptions (Eduard Meyer and others) may be declared to be groundless, since the territory of the latter is known to have been much more extensive than that of the Avvim (Kittel).

*villages*] חָצִירִים, properly speaking, were fortified camps erected by nomad tribes and herdsmen for the protection of their property from

the Caphtorim, that came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead. — Rise ye up, take your <sup>24</sup> journey, and pass over the valley of Arnon; behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon,

hostile incursions (Gen. 25.16 and elsewhere). Such camps have been dug up in Palestine in recent years (comp. J. Garrow Duncan, *Digging Up Biblical History*, I, 89 ff.), but attention should be called particularly to such a place under the name Hazor (el Kedah in Arabic), situated about ten miles beyond the Lake of Galilee, in the direction of what are known as the Waters of Merom, which has been unearthed recently by Professor John Garstang (comp. his *Foundations of Bible History*, pp. 381 ff.). It proved to be surrounded by great sloping ramparts of beaten earth, which is taken to be evidence of occupation by the Hyksos warriors in the first half of the second millennium B. C. E. (comp. Sir Charles Marston, *New Bible Evidence*, New York, 1934, pp. 125 ff.).

*Gaza*] The most southerly of the five Philistine cities (Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron) and of great antiquity (mentioned already in the Tell-el-Amarna Letters of the fifteenth century). It was a strategic city situated on the main road between Egypt and Mesopotamia, at the fringe of the desert and at the junction of a trade route from southern Arabia.

*the Caphtorim*] Caphtor is the name of an island from which the Philistines are supposed to have come forth to take possession of the southern littoral of Palestine (Jer. 47.4; Am. 9.7). Since the Philistines are also known in the Bible under the name of Cherethites (I Sam. 30.14; Ezek. 25.16; Zeph. 2.5), which means Cretans, Caphtor has been generally identified as the island of Crete lying in the Mediterranean Sea southeast of Greece.

**24.** *pass over the valley of Arnon*] The Israelites get permission to pass through the northern boundary of Moab into the land of the Amorites, who were not related to them by blood and hence not immune from attack.

*I have given into thy hand*] Again the prophetic perfect is employed in order to picture a divine act of the future as an accomplished fact (GKC., § 106n).

*Sihon the Amorite*] See comment on 1.4.

- and his land; begin to possess it, and contend with him  
 25 in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee  
 and the fear of thee upon the peoples that are under the  
 whole heaven, who, when they hear the report of thee,  
 shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.'
- 26 And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth  
 unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying:

*begin to possess it*] The Hebrew text has two imperatives: *הָתָלָךְ* "begin, take possession," as in 1.21. This usage of two imperatives side by side without the copula, where the second might be expected to be subordinated to the first, is not uncommon in the Bible, comp. GKC., § 110h.

*contend with him in battle*] Comp. above v. 9.

25. *This day*] i. e. the day on which you cross the Arnon.  
*to put the dread of thee, etc.*] While heretofore the Israelites passed peacefully and unobtrusively through the territories of the nations lying on their route, from now on this situation will be changed: Israel is going to become aggressive. Similarly 11.25.

*under the whole heaven*] A rhetorical, hyperbolic expression not uncommon in the Bible. Comp. 11.25.

26-37. REFUSAL OF SIHON TO LET THE ISRAELITES PASS  
 THROUGH HIS LAND; THE CONSEQUENT BATTLE  
 AND SIHON'S DEFEAT.

26. *I sent messengers*] Comp. Num. 21.21.

*out of the wilderness of Kedemoth*] Not mentioned in the corresponding passage in Numbers. A locality Kedemoth is mentioned in Josh. 13.18 and I Chron. 6.64 as belonging to the territory of the tribe of Reuben, but its precise site is not known. It is presumed that it lay on or near the upper course of the Arnon, on the northern fringe of the wilderness east of Moab.

*words of peace*] In apposition with "messengers," meaning messengers who speak words of peace. Although the Israelites, by the advice of God, were resolved to wage war with Sihon, yet they followed the custom of first making peaceful overtures to the enemy.

'Let me pass through thy land; I will go along by the highway, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. Thou shalt sell me food for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on my feet; as the children of Esau that dwell in Seir, and the Moabites that dwell in Ar, did

27. *by the highway*] The Hebrew text has here בדרך בדרך, meaning "in the way, in the way," the repetition evidently expressing emphasis and implying a certain way and no other (comp. on this figure of speech GKC., § 123e). The parallel passage in Num. 21.22 reads "by the king's highway."

*I will neither turn, etc.*] Num. 21.22 reads instead "we will not turn aside into field, or into vineyard; we will not drink of the water of the wells."

28. *Thou shalt sell me food, etc.*] Comp. above v. 6.

*let me pass through on my feet*] So Num. 20.19, in the application to Edom.

29. *as the children of Esau, etc.*] Although it is not expressly stated above that the Edomites and Moabites granted the Israelites permission to pass through their lands, yet it is generally assumed that they did so reluctantly, since there is no clash recorded between them and the Israelites as in the case of other hostile tribes like the Amorites. With regard to the Edomites, we have the statement in Num. 20.18 ff. that they refused the Israelites passage through their territory, but this happened at an early stage of the desert wanderings, when the Israelites attempted to cross mount Seir from the west, and by no means precludes the possibility of Edomite acquiescence in the passage of the Israelites in later years, at the end of their journeying in the desert, when they reached the eastern fringe of mount Seir. Similarly above in verses 2-8 there is no express statement as to whether the Edomites acceded to the request of the Israelites to let them pass through their country, but there is nothing to suggest that they did not do so. As to the Moabites, it is true that in 23.5 they (alongside with the Ammonites) are severely censured for not meeting the Israelites with bread and water when they came forth out of Egypt, but this does not preclude the probability that they sold them victuals for some material compensation.

unto me; until I shall pass over the Jordan into the land  
 30 which the LORD our God giveth us.' But Sihon king of  
 Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for the LORD thy  
 God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate,  
 that He might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth  
 this day.

31 And the LORD said unto me: 'Behold, I have begun to  
 deliver up Sihon and his land before thee; begin to possess  
 32 his land.' Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his  
 33 people, unto battle at Jahaz. And the LORD our God

30. *let us pass by him*] i. e. through his dominion, similarly Num. 20.18.

*hardened his spirit*] The customary phrase is "harden the heart," comp. Ex. 7.3; 13.15, etc.

*made his heart obstinate*] *קָשָׁה* is used in this sense also in 15.7 and II Chron. 36.13; elsewhere it is employed in a good sense: to strengthen the heart = to encourage.

*as appeareth this day*] Literally "as this day," i. e. as is now the case, so also 4.20, 38; 8.18; 10.15; 29.27 and elsewhere.

31. *I have begun to deliver up Sihon, etc.*] Having hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, the Lord had already ushered in his defeat at the hands of the Israelites.

*begin to possess*] Literally "begin, possess, to take possession," a tautologous phrase. Septuagint and Vulgate omit "possess". But perhaps the repetition is intended to emphasize permanent possession. Comp. above on v. 24.

32. *Then Sihon came out, etc.*] Comp. Num. 21.23.

*Jahaz*] The exact location of this city is unknown, but it must have been situated somewhere north of the Arnon, in the territory allotted to the tribe of Reuben (Josh. 13.18), in the open plains on the east (Jer. 48.21). The Moabite Mesha Inscription (lines 18 ff.) implies that Jahaz was not far from Dibon. Eusebius in his *Onomasticon* (ed. Lagarde, p. 264) places it between Dibon and Medebah.

delivered him up before us; and we smote him, and his sons,  
 and all his people. And we took all his cities at that 34  
 time, and utterly destroyed every city, the men, and the  
 women, and the little ones; we left none remaining; only 35  
 the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, with the spoil  
 of the cities which we had taken. From Aroer, which is on 36

33. *his sons*] Neither in Num. 21.24 nor in Judg. 11.21 is there any mention of Sihon's sons.

34. *utterly destroyed*] Literally "put to the *herem* or ban," which means that the inhabitants were slain and the cattle and property were either destroyed or retained as spoil. This fact is not mentioned in the parallel passage in Num. 21.25.

*every city, the men*] So the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Saadya. The Hebrew text is more correctly rendered "every city of men," i. e. every city so far as it consisted of men. Comp. the same phrase in 3.6. The term for men employed here, *אֲנָשִׁים*, appears to be archaic, hence it is used chiefly in poetry. It occurs, however, as the ordinary term for "men" in other Semitic languages.

*we left none remaining*] Emphasizing the utter destruction of the enemy, even to the extent of preventing future procreation. However, it is well to remember that this type of cruel and ruthless warfare was characteristic of all the peoples of the ancient Orient, not alone the Hebrews.

35. *only the cattle, etc.*] Therefore this *herem* was not as severe as that against Jericho (Josh. 6.17) and Amalek (I Sam. 15.3), which included also the cattle. For the various kinds of *herem*, comp. Lev. 27.28 ff.

36. *Aroer*] A town on the northern bank of the river Arnon, which was included in the territory allotted to the tribe of Reuben (3.12; Josh. 13.16), but had fallen later into the hands of Moab (Jer. 48.19). Tristram (*Land of Moab*, pp. 129 ff.) identified it with the ruins of Ara'ir on the northern edge of the Arnon valley, about 10 miles east of the Dead Sea. Musil (*Arabia Petraea*, I, 338 ff.) identified it with the



the edge of the valley of Arnon, and from the city that is in the valley, even unto Gilead, there was not a city too high for us: the LORD our God delivered up all before us.

- 37 Only to the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not near; all the side of the river Jabbok, and the cities of the hill-country, and wheresoever the LORD our God forbade us.

ruins of Medeyneh on an upper tributary of the Arnon valley (Wady Mojib), on the edge of the desert.

*the city that is in the valley*] So also in Josh. 13.9 and 16, each time immediately after Aroer. It is conjectured that the reference is to Ar of Moab, concerning which see comment above on v. 9.

*even unto Gilead*] This delimitation is too general to be altogether clear. Gilead is the mountainous country east of the Jordan, extending from the table land of Moab northward to the river Yarmuk (comp. 3.16 f.). It is divided by the river Jabbok into two halves (Josh. 12.2), the southern half belonging to the tribe of Gad and the northern half forming part of the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh (Josh. 13.24 ff.). More definite is Num. 21.24, which specifies "from the Arnon unto the Jabbok."

*a city*] The term used here, קריה, is chiefly poetical, hence not so common as עיר. It goes back to a root signifying "to meet" and really means "a meeting place," where people come together.

37. *all the side of the river Jabbok*] The reference is to the tract of land lying along the upper course of the Jabbok on the east, which was Ammonite territory, comp. Num. 21.24. The region west of this territory as far as the Jordan belonged to the Amorites, hence it was not inviolable.

*the cities of the hill-country*] i. e. all the cities comprised within the hill-country stretching east and belonging to Ammon. This country is hilly compared to the Moab plateau.

*forbade us*] Literally "commanded" (us not to touch). Such uncompleted clauses are not uncommon in biblical Hebrew, comp. 4.23.

Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan; and **3**  
 Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his  
 people, unto battle at Edrei. And the LORD said unto me: **2**  
 'Fear him not; for I have delivered him, and all his people,  
 and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him  
 as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt  
 at Heshbon.' So the LORD our God delivered into our hand **3**  
 Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people; and we  
 smote him until none was left to him remaining. And we **4**  
 took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which  
 we took not from them; threescore cities, all the region of

## CHAPTER 3.

## 1-7. DEFEAT OF OG KING OF BASHAN.

1. *Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan*] Exactly as in Num. 21.33. The territory of Bashan lay north and north-east of Gilead, being bounded on the south by the Yarmuk river, on the west by the districts of Geshur and Maacah (later known as Jaulan), on the north by the mountain range of Hermon, and on the east by the volcanic mountain chain Hauran. It was soft and fertile ground, as the name Bashan implies in Arabic, and was celebrated for its breed of cattle and sheep (comp. 32.14; Ezek. 39.18; Am. 4.1; Ps. 22.13), also for its sturdy oaks (Isa. 2.13; Ezek. 27.6; Zech. 11.2). This fertile land fell to the lot of the half tribe of Manasseh.

*Edrei*] Comp. comment on 1.4.

2. *Fear him not*] Apparently Og's gigantic proportions (see below v. 11) inspired the Israelites with fear.

*I have delivered, etc.*] Prophetic perfect, as so often in these discourses, comp. GKC., § 106n.

*unto Sihon*] Comp. 2.33 ff.

3. *until none was left to him remaining*] i. e. the destruction was thorough and complete, as in 2.34. הָשָׁמַד here is best taken as an infinitive construct with anomalous hirek, though some grammarians endeavor to explain it as a perfect with an implicit subject (GKC., § 531).

4. *at that time*] See on 1.9.

*threescore cities, all the region of Argob*] Similarly I Kings 4.13. The precise site of the region of Argob is not known. The Targum renders

- 5 Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these were fortified cities, with high walls, gates, and bars; beside the  
 6 unwall'd towns a great many. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every city, the men, and the women, and the  
 7 little ones. But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey unto ourselves.  
 8 And we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan,

it by מַרְכָּוָה, i. e. Trachonitis of the Hellenistic period, now known as Leja, a volcanic district about 30 miles south of Damascus and about 40 miles east of the Sea of Galilee. But the objection to this identification is that the Trachon region lies too far to the east. Josephus probably came nearer the truth when he identified a portion of Argob with Jaulan (*Antiquities*, VIII. 2.3). Wetzstein identified Argob with the district between the Jordan and the Zumleh range, about 15 miles to the east; while Guthe preferred the region immediately east of Jaulan, between Edrei and Nawa. Sixty is probably a round number, expressing an indefinitely large amount, as in Cant. 3.7 and 6.8.

5. *All these*] i. e. the sixty cities.

*with high walls, gates, and bars*] For a detailed description of the fortified cities in Canaan during the period of the Hebrew conquest, comp. J. Garrow Duncan, *Digging Up Biblical History*, I, 165 ff.

*the unwall'd towns*] עָרֵי הַפְּתוּי = towns of the countryman or country-folk, hence open and unfortified; similarly I Sam. 6.18 and Est. 9.19. The word פְּתוּת in Ezek. 38.11 clearly stands for open hamlets in contrast to fenced cities.

6f. *we utterly destroyed them, etc.*] The cities of Og were treated in exactly the same manner as those of Sihon, comp. comment on 2.34f.

#### 8-17. ALLOTMENT OF THE CONQUERED TERRITORY TO THE TRIBES OF REUBEN, GAD, AND HALF OF MANASSEH.

8. *the two kings of the Amorites*] i. e. Sihon and Og. Accordingly Og's people too were Amorites, though Og himself was reputed to be a descendant of the pre-Amorite Rephaim, see below, v. 11.

from the valley of Arnon unto mount Hermon — which 9  
 Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion, and the Amorites call it  
 Senir — all the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all 10  
 Bashan, unto Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og  
 in Bashan. — For only Og king of Bashan remained of the 11

*from the valley of Arnon unto mount Hermon]* Exactly as in Josh. 12.1.

*Hermon]* Probably derived from the word *הרם* meaning "sacred," hence sacred mountain. Hermon is the highest peak of the Anti-Lebanon range, reaching a height of 9200 feet, and commands southern Syria and northern Palestine. Its modern name is Jebel esh-Sheikh.

9. *which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir]* A geographical note, inserted parenthetically, giving the various names under which Hermon was then known. The Sidonians or Phoenicians called it Sirion, under which name it appears also in Ps. 29.6. The Amorites called it Senir, a name which also appears in Ezek. 27.5, Cant. 4.8 and I Chron. 5.23. Since in the last two passages Senir occurs alongside of Hermon, it is believed that Senir may have been the name of a particular part of the Hermon range, possibly the part between Baalbek and Homs, which is known to medieval Arab geographers by the name of Jebel Sanir. Like the Amorites the Assyrians called Hermon Senir. For a further name of Hermon see 4.48.

10. *all the cities of the plain]* i. e. the plain of Moab. Hebr. *קישר* designates "smooth or level land" of any kind, but when used with the definite article in connection with Transjordan it invariably refers to the elevated plateau or table land of Moab.

*Gilead]* See on 2.36.

*Bashan]* Comp. above v. 1.

*Salcah and Edrei]* These two cities together with the river Yarmuk formed the southern frontier of Bashan. Salcah is generally identified with modern Salkhad, situated some 40 miles south-east of Edrei, on the south-western slope of the Hauran range. It occupies a commanding position, and is well suited for a frontier fortress. As to Edrei, see comment above on v. 1.

11. *For only Og, etc.]* Another parenthetical clause, giving archaeological data concerning Og and his phenomenal prowess. Og is pictured as the last survivor of the giant race Rephaim, so also in Josh. 12.4 and 13.12. Concerning the Rephaim see on 2.11.

remnant of the Rephaim; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man. — And this land we took in possession at that time; from Aroer, which is by the valley of Arnon, and half the hill-country of Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to

*his bedstead is a bedstead of iron*] In proof of Og's giant stature the strong material and huge proportions of his bedstead are registered. Some archaeologists are of the opinion that the reference here is not to a bedstead but rather to a sarcophagus, despite the fact that the Hebr. שָׁרָץ generally means "bed" in the Bible. By iron here is undoubtedly meant the black basalt peculiar to the region of Bashan, which contains about 20 per cent of iron (Driver).

*Rabbah of the children of Ammon*] Rabbah formed the capital of the Ammonites and was situated on the upper course of the Jabbok river, about 23 miles east of the Jordan. It was known afterwards as Philadelphia (the southernmost city of the Decapolis), and now it goes by the name of Ammon.

*after the cubit of a man*] i. e. the ordinary cubit, which is the length of the lower arm (Ibn Ezra). Taking it as about 18 inches, the size of Og's bed or coffin must have been  $13\frac{1}{2}$  by 6 feet (G. A. Smith).

12f. *from Aroer, etc.*] The story of the allotment of the Transjordanic territory among the Reubenites, Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh is given in greater detail in Numbers, chapter 32. The allocation was as follows: the tribe of Reuben received the southernmost portion, bounded on the south by the river Arnon, on the west by the Dead Sea and the Jordan, on the north by a line running from the Jordan south of Beth-nimrah to Heshbon, and on the east by the land of Ammon; the tribe of Gad was given land immediately north of the Reubenites, their portion including the southern part of mount Gilead from the Jabbok southward to Heshbon, and from the vicinity of Rabbath-ammon on the east westward to the Jordan valley; the half-tribe of Manasseh was granted the northern section of Transjordan, comprising the northern part of Gilead and all of Bashan, one of the richest parts of Palestine, and to this day the granary of a large part of Syria.

the Gadites; and the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half-tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob — all that Bashan is called the land of Rephaim. Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called them, even Bashan, after his own name, Havvoth-jair, unto this day. — And I gave Gilead

13. *all the region of Argob*] This was included in the territory of Bashan, see above on v. 4.

*all that Bashan is called the land of Rephaim*] Probably because the mysterious and formidable Rephaim lived there in former times, Og king of Bashan being their descendant (v. 11). On the Rephaim comp. 2.11.

14. A supplementary note on the conquest of Argob, claimed by some critics to be in conflict with v. 4 above and to constitute perhaps a later effort to harmonize the present account with that in Num. 32.41 f.

*Jair the son of Manasseh*] Hebr. בן should be construed here not in the literal sense of "son," but rather in the general sense of "descendant," for, according to I Chron. 2.21 f., Jair was the great-grandson of Manasseh's son Machir, "the father of Gilead."

*all the region of Argob*] See above on v. 4.

*the Geshurites and the Maacathites*] Geshur and Maacah were two Aramean tribes, whose territory appears to have been on the west of Bashan, between Gilead and Hermon, corresponding exactly to present-day Jaulan. From II Sam. 3.3, 10.6, and 13.37 f., it appears that these tribes continued their independent existence in David's time.

*and called them, even Bashan*] Though dissimilar in number, הַבָּשָׁן is apparently explanatory of the preceding אֹתָם "them", but its position is so awkward that many commentators declare it to be a later gloss inserted for the purpose of emphasizing that Havvoth-jair lay in Bashan, not in Gilead, as stated in Num. 32.39.

*Havvot-jair*] i. e. the tent-villages of Jair, elsewhere called also cities (I Chron. 2.22). According to Num. 32.39 ff., Judg. 10.4, and I Kings 4.13, Havvot-jair lay in the territory of Gilead, not in that of Bashan, as stated here and also in Josh. 13.30. We must remember, however, that Gilead is employed in the Bible not only in the narrow sense of the province of that name (comp. on 2.36), but also in the

- 16 unto Machir. And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the valley of Arnon, the middle of the valley for a border; even unto the river  
 17 Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon; the Arabah also, the Jordan being the border thereof, from

larger connotation as representing the whole of Transjordan (comp., for instance, Josh. 22.9; Judg. 20.1; II Kings 10.33). There is also another difficulty: In I Chron. 2.22 the number of the cities of Jair is fixed at 23, while from v. 4. above it appears that their number amounted to 60. However, Keil, in his commentary ad. loc., resolves this difficulty by combining the Chronicler's 23 cities of Jair with "Kenath and its daughters" (ibid. v. 23) in the Hauran range, conquered by Nobah (Num. 32.42), whose number he sets at 37.

*unto this day*] A characteristic and favorite expression in these retrospects, which may indicate either a long or short time intervening between the actual event and the narration thereof. Comp. 2.22; 10.8; 11.4; 29.3; 34.6.

15. *I gave Gilead unto Machir*] Similarly Num. 32.40. Presumably Gilead here stands only for the northern half of that territory, for its southern half belonged to the tribe of Gad. Machir was the firstborn and only son of Manasseh (Gen. 50.23; Josh. 17.1), and quite naturally he stands for the tribe of Manasseh (comp. Judg. 5.14).

16f. A more detailed description of the territory allotted to the Reubenites and Gadites, a general description of which was given above in v. 12.

16. *from Gilead even unto the valley of Arnon*] i. e. the southern half of Gilead formed their northern boundary, while the valley of Arnon constituted their southern boundary.

*the middle of the valley for a border*] i. e. the valley or stream itself forming the dividing line. Note the peculiar use of the copula in חבול, which apparently denotes "at the same time, also," so below v. 17; Num. 34.6; Josh. 13.23, 27; 15.12, 47.

*even unto the river Jabbok*] Meaning the upper Jabbok, which constitutes the eastern boundary of the territory in question and the western border of the Ammonites.

17. *the Arabah also, etc.*] This verse delineates the possessions of the tribes of Reuben and Gad along their western border, namely the eastern half of the Ghor as far as the Jordan.

Chinnereth even unto the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah eastward.

And I commanded you at that time, saying: 'The LORD <sup>18</sup> your God hath given you this land to possess it; ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of

*from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the Arabah]* i. e. almost the whole length of the Jordan valley. Chinnereth was a city which gave its name to the Sea of Chinnereth, better known as the Lake of Genesareth, Sea of Galilee, or Sea of Tiberias. As to the Arabah, comp. comment on 1.1.

*the Salt Sea]* Later known as the Dead Sea (so called by classical authors of the first two centuries of the Common Era). The Arab appellation is Lot's Sea, probably due to Lot's association with this district and the biblical tradition that at the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah near this sea Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt (Gen. 19.26).

*the slopes of Pisgah]* So also 4.49; Josh. 12.3; 13.20. Hebrew פִּסְגָּה means "cleft," and this particular range of mountains near the north-eastern end of the Dead Sea may have been so named on account of clefts and fissures which marked its surface. The summit of Pisgah was called Nebo, and it was from this peak that Moses viewed the promised land before his death (see below v. 27, also 34.1 ff.). The exact location of Pisgah is unknown, nor is such a name in evidence anywhere.

#### 18-22. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TRANS-JORDANIC TRIBES AND TO JOSHUA.

18. *I commanded you]* The address is to the two tribes and a half settled on the other side of the Jordan.

*ye shall pass over, etc.]* A brief and succinct statement of what is treated in extenso in Numbers chapter 32: The two tribes and a half receive Transjordan as an inheritance only on condition that all their men of valor shall pass the Jordan with the other tribes of Israel and assist them in the arduous task of conquering Cisjordan or Canaan, after which they may return to their homes.

*armed]* חלוצים, properly "equipped for war," though some render it "with loins girt" (חלצים meaning "loins"), or "stripped" of superfluous clothing, like Latin *expeditus*.



- 19 Israel, all the men of valour. But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle — I know that ye have much cattle — shall abide in your cities which I have given you; 20 until the LORD give rest unto your brethren, as unto you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God giveth them beyond the Jordan; then shall ye return every 21 man unto his possession, which I have given you.' And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying: 'Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings; so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms 22 whither thou goest over. Ye shall not fear them; for the LORD your God, He it is that fighteth for you.'

*men of valour*] i. e. men capable of bearing arms. According to Josh. 4.12 f., about 40,000 of them joined the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan.

19. *But your wives, etc.*] i. e. all the non-combatants, who are to be left behind in the fenced cities.

*I know that ye have much cattle*] A parenthetic clause, explanatory of the preceding "cattle."

20. *until the Lord give rest*] Similarly 12.10; 25.19 and elsewhere. *beyond the Jordan*] i. e. west of the Jordan, from the standpoint of the speaker, who is stationed east of that river.

21. Moses bids Joshua, his servant and successor, take courage for the future in view of the decisive victories over Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan, since these are an earnest of the victories that are to come in the near future. This episode is lacking in the parallel account of Numbers, chapter 32.

*Thine eyes have seen*] Literally "thine eyes are those that saw," similarly 4.3 and 11.7. An appeal to personal experience, which is not uncommon in these discourses.

22. *Ye shall not fear them*] From Joshua Moses turns to address the people, hence the change from the singular to the plural. The Samaritan, Septuagint, and Vulgate, exhibit here the singular, as if it were addressed to Joshua.

*He it is*] Emphasis is laid on the fact that God fights for the people and that with His assistance they are bound to win, comp. also 1.30.

And I besought the LORD at that time, saying: 'O Lord 23-4  
 God, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness,  
 and Thy strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or  
 on earth, that can do according to Thy works, and accord-  
 ing to Thy mighty acts? Let me go over, I pray Thee, 25  
 and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan,  
 that goodly hill-country, and Lebanon.' But the LORD 26

Critics of the Pentateuch (like Dillmann and Steuernagel) doubt the genuineness of the last two verses in view of the fact that the charge to Joshua is pronounced further below, in v. 28, and also in 31.7 and 23. However, since the appointment of Joshua as leader is announced already in 1.38, it stands to reason that Moses would endeavor to encourage Joshua regarding his great task on some suitable occasion, when, as in the passage before us, mention is made of the impending struggle to take possession of Canaan. On the other hand, v. 28 below enjoins the formal institution of Joshua as leader of Israel, which is finally carried out in chapter 31. .

**23-29. MOSES' PRAYER FOR PERMISSION TO ENTER THE  
 PROMISED LAND.**

23. *And I besought the Lord*] Moses was aware that he had been forbidden to enter the land of Canaan (see 1.37), but, at the new turn of events brought about by the defeat of Sihon and Og, he thought the time opportune to implore God to rescind the decree against him and let him enter that desirable country (Sifre).

24. *Thou hast begun*] Having begun to show me Thy great deeds, let me also see their consummation.

*Thy greatness*] In the sense of kindness and benevolence (Rashi).

*Thy strong hand*] With reference to the defeat of Sihon and Og. So also 6.21; 7.8; 9.26; 34.12.

25. *the good land*] See 1.35.

*that goodly hill-country*] The reference is to the mountainous region west of the Jordan, which stretches from the land of Edom to the Plain of Esdraelon and of which Jerusalem formed the center. The Hebr. הַר, like the Arabic *jebel*, signifies not only a single mountain, but also a mountain range.

*Lebanon*] Hermon, the southernmost summit of the Lebanon moun-

was wroth with me for your sakes, and hearkened not unto me; and the LORD said unto me: 'Let it suffice thee; speak  
 27 no more unto Me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with thine eyes;  
 28 for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit  
 29 the land which thou shalt see.' So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor.

tains, is visible in clear weather along the Ghor (the valley of the Jordan) from above Jericho.

26. *was wroth with me*] ויחעבר really means "was enraged," a much stronger term than ויחאן of 1.37.

*Let it suffice thee*] Comp. on 1.6.

27. *Get thee up, etc.*] Moses is only granted the privilege of viewing the promised land from a distance.

*the top of Pisgah*] Namely mount Nebo, comp. 34.1.

*lift up thine eyes, etc.*] So Gen. 13.14.

*this Jordan*] Comp. 31.2.

28. *But charge Joshua*] i. e. appoint him to his office of leading the people. הָצַד is found in the same sense elsewhere, as, e. g., I Sam.

13.14 and 25.30.

*encourage him and strengthen him*] The execution of this order is found in 31.7 and 23.

29. This verse closes the retrospect begun in 1.6.

*in the valley*] נַחַל signifies "hollow, glen, ravine," not a valley in the larger sense. Hence the reference here cannot be to the Jordan valley, but rather to one of the glens which descend to the Jordan from the Moab plateau.

*over against Beth-peor*] The precise location of Beth-peor is not known. Eusebius (*Onomasticon*, ed. Lagarde, p. 233) describes Beth-phogor (=Beth-peor) as being in the proximity of mount Phogor, opposite to Jericho, 6 miles above Livias (the modern Tell-er-Rameh). If this description is correct, then the ravine under discussion might properly be identified with Wady Uyun Musa, a ravine running north of mount Nebo or the Pisgah range.

And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto 4  
the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that ye  
may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD,

#### CHAPTER 4.

1-40. EXHORTATION TO ISRAEL TO REMEMBER FOREVER  
THE GREAT EXPERIENCE AT HOREB, WHERE GOD  
WAS REVEALED IN ALL HIS GLORY.

1-8. ISRAEL IS URGED TO OBSERVE THE  
LAWS AND STATUTES NOW ABOUT TO BE SET BEFORE IT.

1. *And now*] Having given a summary of the events in the desert and God's intercession on behalf of Israel at every critical moment, Moses comes to the burden of his discourse, namely that in return for God's bounty Israel must obey unconditionally His commandments and injunctions.

*hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances*] i. e. the statutory laws, which are fundamental and immutable, and the judicial decisions, which are evolutionary and shaped to the exigencies of time and conditions. Hebr. *ph* "statute" is derived from a root meaning "to engrave" on a stone, hence it denotes a permanent prescription and indelible law of whatever nature; while *ph* "ordinance" signifies a decree by a judge called forth by a clash of two parties. Hence the rabbinical explanation that ordinances are for the purpose of regulating relations between man and man, while statutes prescribe man's behavior towards himself and towards lower creatures. Another view is that ordinances are the kind of laws that are comprehensible, while statutes are injunctions that are not comprehensible to the human mind (Sifre, Rashi on Lev. 18.4).

*to do them*] i. e. to practice them in life, not merely to keep them in theory.

*that ye may live*] By actually practicing them your life may be prolonged. Obedience to law is indispensable to the life of a people, hence only those nations have survived in the world who, like the Hebrews, had been loyal to their ancestral laws, while many powerful nations perished because of their disobedience to circumscribing laws and hedging regulations.

- 2 the God of your fathers, giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of  
 3 the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did in Baal-peor; for all the men that followed the Baal of Peor, the LORD thy God hath  
 4 destroyed them from the midst of thee. But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you  
 5 this day. Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go in to

2. *Ye shall not add, etc.*] Neither additions to nor diminutions from the fixed code of laws are permitted; similarly 13.1.

*that ye may keep*] לשמר, infin. with Lamed, expressing aim or purpose, comp. Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 278.

3. *in Baal-peor*] The incident of backsliding at Baal-peor is recorded more fully in Num. 25.1-5. Baal-peor seems to have been a locality on the mountain Peor (Num. 23.28) where Baal was worshipped. Of what nature this cult was is not indicated clearly, but, to judge from the statements of Rabbis and Church Fathers, it must have been obscene and repulsive. From the circumstance that here the Israelites had illicit intercourse with the daughters of Moab we may perhaps infer that the cult was priapic in nature. At any rate, it left bitter memories, as is evident from Hos. 9.10 and Ps. 106.28. It should be noted that names of places combined with Baal are frequent in the Bible (comp., for instance, Baal-berith, Baal-gad, Baal-hazor, Baal-meon, Baal-zephon), as well as in Canaanite inscriptions.

*that followed the Baal of Peor*] This phrase makes the cultic nature of the place evident.

4. *cleave*] Expresses a very close attachment to God, so also 10.20; 11.22; 13.5; 30.20.

5. *I have taught you*] The perfect is used here instead of the participle (comp. above v. 2) for the purpose of bringing out the fact that also in the past, ever since the days at Horeb, Moses taught his people statutes and ordinances by which to guide their life in their future national home.

possess it. Observe therefore and do them; for this is your 6  
 wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples,  
 that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: 'Surely  
 this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For  
 what great nation is there, that hath God so nigh 7  
 unto them, as the LORD our God is whensoever we call  
 upon Him? And what great nation is there, that hath 8  
 statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which  
 I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and 9  
 keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which

6. *Observe therefore and do them*] According to the Rabbis, "observe them" means "study them," as a preliminary to practicing them.

*for this is your wisdom, etc.*] These statutes and ordinances are the products of wisdom and understanding, and they distinguish you from all the nations around you.

*this great nation*] Great in justice and righteousness, though not in numbers.

7. *that hath God so nigh unto them*] אֱלֹהִים may be taken as a numerical plural meaning heathen gods or as a plural of majesty denoting the God of Israel (GKC., § 124g; see also above on 1.6). Medieval Jewish commentators, following the Talmud (Sanh. 38b), interpret it here as the God of Israel, though the wording of the sentence, particularly יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ in contrast to אֱלֹהִים, would seem to favor the rendering "gods."

*whensoever we call upon Him*] כֹּל with the infinitive, as in Gen. 30.41; I Kings 8.52; I Chron. 23.31.

8. *so righteous*] Not only are the statutes and ordinances wise and expedient, but also just and righteous.

*as all this law*] i. e. as all this body of laws comprised within the term Torah; similarly 1.5.

#### 9-24. AGAINST IDOLATRY.

9. *Only*] The Hebr. particle כִּי is restrictive, the sense being that even if you forget everything else, you should never forget the day at Horeb (Ibn Ezra).

thine eyes saw, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but make them known unto thy  
 10 children and thy children's children; the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me: 'Assemble Me the people, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that  
 11 they may teach their children.' And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and  
 12 thick darkness. And the LORD spoke unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw  
 13 no form; only a voice. And He declared unto you

*depart from thy heart*] i. e. vanish from thy memory. Among the Hebrews the heart was considered as the seat of intelligence.

*make them known*] Not only should you remember them yourselves, but you should impart them also to future generations.

10. *the day*] i. e. lest you forget the day, "the day" being in apposition with "the things" in the preceding sentence.

*in Horeb*] i. e. at mount Sinai, where God revealed Himself to Israel and Moses presented the basic laws to the people.

*Assemble Me the people*] Hence the day is known as "the day of the assembly," comp. 9.10; 10.4; 18.16.

*that they may learn to fear Me*] Similarly 14.23; 17.19; 31.13.

*all the days, etc.*] So also 12.1; 31.13.

*that they may teach their children*] Namely to fear Me.

11. *And ye came near, etc.*] Comp. Ex. 19.17 f.

*under the mountain*] i. e. Horeb or Sinai.

*unto the heart of heaven*] Hebr. לֵב "heart" is used figuratively for "center, midst," comp. Ex. 15.8, and elsewhere.

12. *out of the midst of the fire*] God being surrounded by fire and invisible to the human eye.

*but ye saw no form*] חֲמוּמָה signifies "form, likeness," whether palpable or impalpable. Here no doubt material likeness is meant, for the speaker wishes to stress the incorporeality and spirituality of God.

His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even the ten words; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you 14 statutes and ordinances, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore 15 good heed unto yourselves — for ye saw no manner of form on the day that the LORD spoke unto you in Horeb

13. *His covenant*] ברית is a technical term for a solemn compact or agreement between man and man or between God and man. Such an agreement was generally solemnized by a sacrificial feast (comp., for instance, Gen. 26.28 ff.), at which the animal was cut to pieces and the contracting parties passed between the pieces and solemnly invoked on themselves a fate similar to that of the animal if they did not fulfill the terms of the agreement (comp. Gen. 15.9 ff.). Hence the Hebr. idiom כרת ברית "cut a covenant," which is equivalent to "conclude an agreement." A striking instance of a covenant between God and man is found in the Genesis passage quoted above, in which Abraham's descendants are promised the land of Canaan in return for their unconditional obedience to God. The covenant between God and Israel to which our passage has reference is that concluded at Horeb or Sinai on the day when the ten commandments were delivered to Israel (Ex. 24.7 f.; 34.10 and 27). The terms of this covenant are embodied chiefly in the ten commandments, which were engraved on two stone tablets known as "the tables of the covenant," while the ark in which they were placed was known as "the ark of God's covenant."

*the ten words*] Also known as the ten commandments or Decalogue and constituting the fundamental law of the Hebrew theocracy. Comp. Ex. 20.1 ff.

*two tables of stone*] See Ex. 24.12. They are also referred to as tables of the covenant (9.9, etc.) and tables of the testimony (Ex. 31.18, etc.).

14. *to teach you statutes and ordinances*] In addition to the ten commandments, which were fundamental and independent of time and place, Moses was told to teach them also other laws necessary to regulate their civil and communal life in Canaan.

15. *ye saw no manner of form*] Emphasizing once more the incorporeality of God, expressed above in v. 12.



16 out of the midst of the fire — lest ye deal corruptly, and make you a graven image, even the form of any figure, 17 the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that 18 flieth in the heaven, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water 19 under the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, thou be drawn away and worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath allotted unto all the peoples under the whole

16. *a graven image*] פסל refers particularly to an idol shaped of wood, stone or metal.

*figure*] סמל occurs in Phoenician in the sense of statue.

*the likeness of male or female*] The Oriental pantheon, like that of the Greeks, contained male and female deities, each god having a consort from whom, in the manner of men, he begot offspring (W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 514 ff.).

17f. The Israelites are enjoined not to make reproductions of beast, bird, reptile, or fish, for the purpose of worshiping them. That such mystic cults and animal worship existed in the Orient may be seen from Ezek. 8.10 f. Comp. also W. R. Smith, op. cit., pp. 358 f. and 625 f.

18. *under the earth*] So Ex. 20.4. The reference is to the subterranean waters on which the flat surface of the earth was supposed to rest (comp. Ps. 24.2; 136.6).

19. *the sun and the moon and the stars*] The heavenly bodies, too, on account of their dazzling brilliance, formed objects of idolatrous worship in the Orient. Thus the host of heaven constituted the dominant influence in Babylonian religion. That the Israelites were subject to its influence at one time or another may be seen from II Kings 17.16; 21.3; 23.4 f.; Jer. 8.2; 19.13; Ezek. 8.16; Zeph. 1.5.

*thou be drawn away*] Properly reflexive, "let thyself be drawn," through the example of neighboring nations. So also 30.17.

*and worship them, and serve them*] Similarly 5.9 and 30.17; but more frequently in inverted order, as 8.19; 11.16; 17.3; 29.25.

*which the Lord thy God hath allotted unto all the peoples*] According to

heaven. But you hath the LORD taken and brought forth 20  
 out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto Him a  
 people of inheritance, as ye are this day. Now the LORD 21  
 was angered with me for your sakes, and swore that I  
 should not go over the Jordan, and that I should not go  
 in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth

the Talmud (Meg. 9b) the Alexandrian translators of the Scriptures found this passage objectionable, since it seems to imply that God permitted all other nations to worship the celestial bodies; consequently they are said to have added the phrase "to give light to them" (which, however, is wanting in the current Septuagint, but comp. *in ministerium* of the Vulgate). On the other hand, Rab (in 'Ab. Zarah 55a), RSbM and others, are inclined to take the phrase as it stands and to explain it somewhat as follows: God, as the supreme ruler of the universe, assigns to every nation its cult, and while He granted to the Hebrews monotheism, the highest form of worship, he allotted to the heathens the astral cult, which, though inferior, is better than utter ignorance of God and His creation.

20. *But you*] Emphatic, meaning you in contrast to other nations.  
*hath the Lord taken*] i. e. chosen as His possession.

*out of the iron furnace*] By reason of Israel's bondage in Egypt, that country had been compared to a furnace for smelting iron, comp. also I Kings 8.51 and Jer. 11.4.

*a people of inheritance*] עם נחלה, for which we find elsewhere עם סגולה, "a people of peculiar property" (7.6 and 14.2), a phrase expressing the eternal and indissoluble relationship subsisting between God and Israel as between father and son and further emphasizing the mutual obligations of the two contracting parties: paternal protection of Israel on the part of God in return for filial devotion and unconditional obedience to God.

21. *the Lord was angered with me, etc.*] Similarly 1.37 and 3.26.

*and swore*] According to the Rabbis, the oath is implied in the word לכן "therefore" in Num. 20.12; comp. I Sam. 3.14.

*that I should not go in*] The Hebrew text has בא without a suffix, which is surprising in view of the preceding עָקְרִי, but such a construction is not unusual, comp. GKC., § 115e note.

*which the Lord, etc.*] So 15.4; 19.10; 20.16, etc.

- 22 thee for an inheritance; but I must die in this land, I must not go over the Jordan; but ye are to go over, and  
 23 possess that good land. Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image, even the likeness of any thing which the LORD thy God hath for-  
 24 bidden thee. For the LORD thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.
- 25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have been long in the land, and shall deal corruptly, and make a graven image, even the form of any thing, and shall do that which is evil in the sight of the

22. *but I must die*] Properly "I am about to die." *אֲנִי כֹה* is a participial construction often used of the imminent future, comp. GKC., § 116p, also Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 168.

*I must not go over the Jordan*] Repetition for emphasis.

23. *Take heed, etc.*] A fresh exhortation against image worship, more briefly stated than in verses 15 ff.

*the covenant*] See above on v. 13.

24. *a devouring fire*] i. e. like a devouring fire (Ibn Ezra), consuming everyone that stands in His way and opposes His will, comp. 9.3, also Ex. 24.17.

*a jealous God*] i. e. a God that will not tolerate nor condone worship of other gods beside Him; similarly 5.9; 6.15; comp. also Ex. 20.5; 34.14, etc.

#### 25-31. A WARNING THAT IN CASE OF BACKSLIDING ISRAEL WILL BE CAST OUT OF THE LAND OF ITS INHERITANCE.

25. *ye shall have been long in the land*] Literally "ye shall be grown old in the land," implying, according to Dillmann, the loss of spiritual freshness and the blunting of original impressions.

*shall do that which is evil*] As a matter of fact Israel did fall away from God and worship idols immediately after the death of Joshua (Judg. 2.10 ff.).

LORD thy God, to provoke Him; I call heaven and earth 26  
 to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly  
 perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan  
 to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but  
 shall utterly be destroyed. And the LORD shall scatter you 27  
 among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number  
 among the nations, whither the LORD shall lead you away.  
 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, 28  
 wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor  
 smell. But from thence ye will seek the LORD thy God; 29  
 and thou shalt find Him, if thou search after Him with all  
 thy heart and with all thy soul. In thy distress, when all 30

26. *I call heaven and earth to witness*] Heaven and earth are called to witness because they are eternal and immutable, comp. Rashi on 32.1. *utterly perish from off the land*] A threat of exile from Canaan, which was realized in later years; similarly 11.17.

27. *few in number*] Not only will the Israelites be reduced in numbers through misfortune in their own land, but even their remnant will be scattered among many nations, making them look very small and entirely insignificant.

28. *ye shall serve gods*] An additional punishment in exile is the almost inevitable backsliding to gross heathenism in pagan surroundings. *the work of men's hands*] Namely, images fashioned by human hands out of wood and stone, similarly Ps. 115.4; 135.15, and elsewhere.

*which neither see, etc.*] i. e. devoid of all senses of perception and signs of life. This sarcastic remark about idols is not uncommon in the Scriptures, comp. particularly Ps. 115.5 ff. and 135.16 f.

29. But this backsliding will not be permanent, for after a while the Hebrews will experience a change of heart and will proceed once more to search after their God and find Him.

*from thence*] i. e. from the lands of exile.

*with all thy heart and all thy soul*] A characteristic phrase in Deuteronomy, indicating all the faculties of man. Heart here stands for the seat of intellect and soul for the seat of affections.

30. *In thy distress*] Construing נָצַח as a noun, which is followed by

these things are come upon thee, in the end of days, thou wilt return to the LORD thy God, and hearken unto His  
 31 voice; for the LORD thy God is a merciful God; He will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant  
 32 of thy fathers which He swore unto them. For ask now of the days past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?  
 33 Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of

a dative instead of a suffix, comp. Jon. 2.3; Ps. 102.3; 106.44; 120.1. Another view is that originally the word was intended as an infinitive and pronounced therefore *הָאָזֶר* (Driver).

*in the end of days*] The Hebrew phrase *בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים*, which in some prophetic books of the Bible may be of eschatological import, denoting the ideal or Messianic age, is here a relative, not an absolute, term, and no doubt has reference to the time of Israel's return to God after the period of alienation.

31. *a merciful God*] Though God is jealous (above v. 24) and avenging (Nah. 1.2) to His adversaries, He is merciful to His adherents and ready to forgive sins once they are fully repented. Similarly Ex. 34.6.

*destroy thee*] i. e. completely, without leaving a remnant.

#### 32-40. THE UNIQUENESS OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL.

32. At no time and in no place has there been such a great thing as the revelation at Horeb (v. 33) or the exodus from Egypt (v. 34). The Rabbis (Hag. 11b) deduced from this verse that man may indulge in studying the history of the world since its creation and endeavor to comprehend the nature of things within the created world, but under no circumstances must he study antediluvian history or explore things outside the created world.

33. *the voice of God, etc.*] During the revelation on Sinai, comp. above v. 12 and Ex. 19.19.

the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or <sup>34</sup>  
 hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the  
 midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, and by won-  
 ders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an out-  
 stretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that  
 the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before thine  
 eyes? Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know <sup>35</sup>  
 that the LORD, He is God; there is none else beside Him.  
 Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He <sup>36</sup>  
 might instruct thee; and upon earth He made thee to see

*and live*] The belief prevailed that no man can see God and live (Ex. 20.19; 33.20, and below 5.23).

**34. trials**] מִסָּוָה signifies "testings", with which the Pharaoh of Egypt was tested.

*signs and wonders*] The phrase אֵלֶּה וּמוֹפְתֵי in the Pentateuch refers to the miracles wrought by God in Egypt, comp. particularly Ex. 7.3.

*war*] While crossing the Red Sea, comp. Ex. 14.25.

*a mighty hand*] See Ex. 6.1; 13.9, etc.

*an outstretched arm*] See Ex. 6.6.

*great terrors*] i. e. terror-provoking happenings, such as the Israelites' miraculous passage of the Red Sea and the utter annihilation of the pursuing Egyptians (Ibn Ezra).

**35. it was shown**] All these signs and portents made it evident to you that the Lord is God.

*there is none else beside Him*] An affirmation of God's supremacy and sole rule over the world.

**36. Out of heaven**] See Ex. 20.22.

*that He might instruct thee*] This rendering is hardly adequate, for יָסָר "denotes not the instruction of the intellect, but the discipline or education of the moral nature: the spectacle was one adapted to quell waywardness and pride, and to generate in Israel's heart a temper of submissiveness and reverence" (Driver).

*upon earth*] See Ex. 19.16. The verse conveys the idea that both heaven and earth are full of God's glory.

His great fire; and thou didst hear His words out of the  
 37 midst of the fire. And because He loved thy fathers, and  
 chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with His  
 38 presence, with His great power, out of Egypt, to drive  
 out nations from before thee greater and mightier than  
 thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an in-  
 39 heritance, as it is this day; know this day, and lay it to  
 thy heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and  
 40 upon the earth beneath; there is none else. And thou  
 shalt keep His statutes, and His commandments, which I  
 command thee this day, that it may go well with thee,  
 and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest  
 prolong thy days upon the land, which the LORD thy God  
 giveth thee, for ever.

37. *And because*] חתח means literally "instead of, in lieu of," i. e. in return for the fact that He loved thy fathers, comp. 21.14; 22.29; 28.47. This protasis extends to v. 39, where the apodosis begins and continues to v. 41 (Dillmann).

*thy fathers*] i. e. the patriarchs, similarly 10.15.

*their seed after them*] The Hebrew text has here the singular "his seed after him," as if referring specially to Abraham. But all the ancient versions read the plural, which harmonizes better with the context, and, moreover, the parallel passage 10.15 exhibits the plural.

38. *nations . . . greater and mightier than thou*] Namely the Trans-jordanic Amorites and Bashanites who had already been subdued. Some commentators are of the opinion that this reference includes also the Canaanite tribes this side of the Jordan.

39. Repetition and amplification of the thought expressed above in v. 35.

*lay it to thy heart*] i. e. recall to mind, consider, reflect.

40. *that it may go well with thee*] So 5.16; 6.3, 18; 12.25, 28; 22.7.

*for ever*] כל הימים, literally "all the days." Since v. 26 above mentions the possibility of Israel's exile from Canaan, some commentators find it difficult to connect "for ever" with the immediately preceding phrase "which the Lord thy God giveth thee." But very likely this

Then Moses separated three cities beyond the Jordan <sup>41</sup>  
toward the sunrising; that the manslayer might flee <sup>42</sup>  
thither, that slayeth his neighbour unawares, and hated  
him not in time past; and that fleeing unto one of these

phrase is conditional: God gives the land to you for ever if you obey Him in every way and serve Him faithfully, contrariwise He does not hesitate to cast you out therefrom.

End of Moses' first discourse.

#### 41-43. MOSES APPOINTS CITIES OF REFUGE IN TRANSJORDANIA.

The earliest provision for the protection of the life of an unwitting slayer is found in Ex. 21.13, where a place of refuge is promised him. In Num. 35.10 ff. the number of such places of refuge is fixed at six, three in Transjordan and three in Canaan. In the passage before us the three cities of refuge in Transjordan are named by Moses, since they were of immediate need after the conquest of that territory. As to the three cities of refuge in Canaan, they are further elaborated upon by Moses in 19.1 ff., but their actual appointment is naturally left to Joshua, the conqueror of Canaan (Josh. 20.7).

41. *Then*] i. e. at the time of the preceding discourse in Moab.

*separated*] יבדיל, an imperfect representing an action in its nascence (comp. Driver, *Tenses*, p. 32), really means "proceeded to set apart."

*three cities*] According to the Talmud (Mak. 9b) the Transjordanic two tribes and a half required as many cities of refuge as the nine tribes of Canaan, because the territory of Gilead was notorious for its criminals and murderers, comp. Hos. 6.8.

*beyond the Jordan*] See on 1.1.

*toward the sunrising*] Circumscribing the preceding geographical term as having reference to east of Jordan.

42. *that the manslayer, etc.*] Similarly 19.3 f.

*unawares*] i. e. accidentally, without intention or premeditation.

*that fleeing unto one of these cities*] Specifies the preceding clause "flee thither" by a more precise statement. הָאֵלֶּה "these," instead of the fuller form הָאֵלֶּה, is archaic (Phoenician), though it may have been pronounced as a trisyllable.



43 cities he might live: Bezer in the wilderness, in the table-land, for the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

44 And this is the law which Moses set before the children  
45 of Israel; these are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which Moses spoke unto the children of

43. *Bezer in the wilderness*] Mentioned also in Josh. 20.8 and 21.36, but its exact location is unknown. According to the inscription on the Moabite Stone (middle of ninth century B. C. E.), this city was re-captured and rebuilt by Mesha king of Moab.

*Ramoth in Gilead*] Similarly in Josh. 20.8 and 21.38. According to Eusebius (*Onomasticon*, ed. Lagarde, p. 287) it was situated 15 Roman miles west of Philadelphia (Rabbath Ammon). It has been identified with the modern es-Salt, about 10 miles east of the mouth of the Jabbok and the crossing of the Jordan at Damieh; though some commentators favor the ruined town of Jal'ud, about 6 miles north of es-Salt.

*Golan in Bashan*] Similarly in Josh. 20.8 and 21.27. Most likely it was the city that gave name to the province of Gaulanitis (so in Josephus and other Hellenistic writers), modern Jaulan, stretching between the Hermon and the Yarmuk river. In the days of Eusebius (*Onomasticon*, p. 242) it was still known as a large village. In the Talmud it appears as גולונה or גבולונה. Schumacher (*The Jaulan*, London, 1888) identified Golan with the modern Sahem-el-Jaulan, situated 17 miles east of the Lake of Galilee.

#### 44-49. INTRODUCTION TO MOSES' CHIEF DISCOURSE CONTAINING THE EXPOSITION OF THE LAW (CHAPTERS 5-26).

44. *the law*] in general, see on 1.5.

45. Enumeration of the particular kinds of law: testimonies, statutes, and ordinances.

*testimonies*] i. e. attestations of the divine will concerning human conduct, hence moral and religious decrees.

*statutes and ordinances*] See above on v. 1.

Israel, when they came forth out of Egypt; beyond the 46  
 Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land  
 of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon,  
 whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, when they  
 came forth out of Egypt; and they took his land in pos- 47  
 session, and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings  
 of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan toward the  
 sunrising; from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley 48  
 of Arnon, even unto mount Sion — the same is Hermon —  
 and all the Arabah beyond the Jordan eastward, even unto 49  
 the sea of the Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah.

46. *beyond the Jordan*] See on 1.1.

*in the valley, etc.*] Comp. 3.29.

*in the land of Sihon, etc.*] Comp. 1.4 and 3.2.

48. *from Aroer, etc.*] Comp. 2.36 and 3.8.

*mount Sion*] Another name for mount Hermon, which was called Sirion by the Sidonians and Senir by the Amorites (3.9). This name (𐤊𐤍𐤕 = lofty peak) is corroborated by the Septuagint, hence it is not necessary to assume a corruption from Sirion, following the Syriac version.

49. This verse is similar to 3.17, which should be compared.

## CHAPTERS 5-26.

### MOSES' CHIEF DISCOURSE CONTAINING THE EXPOSITION OF THE LAW.

This long discourse is clearly divided into two distinct parts: chapters 5-11 are introductory and delineate more clearly than heretofore the general theocratic principles by which the Hebrews are to be governed in Canaan; chapters 12-26 contain an exposition of a code of special laws, civil and criminal, by which the daily life of the Hebrews is to be regulated.

- 5 And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them:  
 Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I  
 speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and  
 2 observe to do them. The LORD our God made a covenant  
 3 with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with  
 our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here  
 4 alive this day. The LORD spoke with you face to face in  
 5 the mount out of the midst of the fire—I stood between

### CHAPTER 5.

#### THE COVENANT AT HOREB AND THE DECALOGUE ON WHICH IT IS BASED.

#### 1-5. A REMINDER OF THE COVENANT AT HOREB.

1. *the statutes and the ordinances*] See on 4.1.  
*in your ears*] i. e. directly to you, not through an intermediary.  
*that ye may learn them*] i. e. in theory.  
*and observe to do them*] i. e. in practice.
2. *made a covenant*] See on 4.13.
3. *with our fathers*] Rather forefathers, the patriarchs, as in 4.31 and elsewhere.  
*but with us*] According to Rashi and Ibn Ezra the meaning of the passage is: not alone with our fathers but also with us. Abravanel, on the other hand, maintains that in concluding the covenant God had in view only the coming generation, since He knew that the present generation would not enter Canaan.  
*even us, etc.*] Literally "us, these here today", etc.
4. *face to face*] i. e. in close proximity, without the intervention of another.
5. *I stood between the Lord and you*] viz. as mediator and interpreter. The apparent contradiction between this and the preceding verse (likewise below, v. 19) is explained in the Talmud (Ber. 45a) as follows: During the promulgation of the Decalogue the relation between God and Moses was that of a reciter (קורא) and an interpreter (מתורגמן). The Israelites, who could not ascend the mountain, heard the voice of God distinctly, but they could not understand the words and were in need of someone to interpret them to the comprehension of everybody.

the LORD and you at that time, to declare unto you the word of the LORD; for ye were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount — saying:

*to declare]* i. e. to explain, to make clear.

*the word of the Lord]* The singular is used here collectively. The ancient versions (Samaritan, Septuagint, Targum, Peshitta, and Vulgate) have the plural, "words."

*ye were afraid]* But according to Ex. 19.21 ff. God warned the people not to ascend the mountain at the penalty of death.

#### 6-18. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

The Ten Commandments (commonly known as the Ten Words, עשרת הדברִים, comp. Ex. 34.28; Deut. 4.13; 10.4, but also called Testimony, עֵדוּת, in Ex. 25.21, and Covenant, בְּרִית, in Deut. 9.9), which lay down the double duty of Israelites towards God and towards men and consequently form the basis for religion and morality, are repeated from Ex. 20.1-17 with minor verbal variations and stylistic changes, which are mentioned further below. Generally speaking, the text in Exodus is briefer and more concise than the text before us. The principal divergences are as follows: in motivating the commandment about the Sabbath, Exodus mentions the fact that God, too, rested on the seventh day from the labor of creation, while Deuteronomy recalls the fact that Israel was a slave in Egypt, whence God brought him out with a mighty hand; in the commandment dealing with filial devotion, Deuteronomy adds the promise of prosperity to that of longevity of Exodus; in the last commandment, against coveting a neighbor's possessions, Deuteronomy places the neighbor's wife before his house and also adds the neighbor's field. The commandments are not individually numbered in the Bible, hence their variant division. The oldest division known to us is that recorded by Philo and Josephus, which regards the first sentence (v. 6) as preface, the injunction against polytheism (v. 7) as the first commandment, the injunction against idolatry (vv. 8-10) as the second commandment, and so on. The talmudic division regards the first sentence (v. 6) as the first commandment, though it is in the form of a declaration and not in that of a

- 6 I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- 7-8 Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, even any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that
- 9 is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am

commandment; while it considers both the injunctions against other gods and against idols (vv. 7-10) as the second commandment. This division obtains among the Jews to-day, while Christian denominations follow their own divisions.

#### 6. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT AFFIRMING THE MONOTHEISTIC DOCTRINE.

6. *I am the Lord thy God*] A categorical declaration indicative of the intimate relationship existing between God and Israel.  
*who brought thee out*] Hence has a just claim on your allegiance.  
*the house of bondage*] Literally "the house of slaves."

#### 7-10. THE SECOND COMMANDMENT AGAINST POLYTHEISM AND IDOLATRY.

7. *before Me*] Some render על פני "in preference to Me," others even "as an insult to Me."

8. *a graven image*] An image carved in wood or stone, such as is current among all pagans everywhere.

*any manner of likeness*] כל תמונה is in apposition with the preceding פסל, while in Ex. 20.4 the two words are connected by a copula.

*in heaven above*] i. e. birds, comp. 4.17.

*in the earth beneath*] i. e. animals and creeping things, see *ibid.*

*in the water, etc.*] i. e. fishes, comp. 4.18.

9. *serve them*] הִשְׁתַּחֲוִיָּה is a peculiar and anomalous form of the impf. Kal, which occurs also in 13.3; Ex. 20.5 and 23.24. Is it possible that the Masora intended these forms as impf. Hoph'al meaning "thou shalt not allow thyself to be brought to worship them?" Comp. GKC., § 60b.

a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto the 10 thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God 11

*a jealous God]* See on 4.24.

*visiting, etc.]* Emphasizing God's uncompromising attitude toward sinners, similarly Ex. 34.7; Num. 14.18 and Jer. 32.18. This principle of punishing the children for the sins of the fathers would seem to be in disaccord with 24.16; Jer. 31.29 and Ezek. 18.20, according to which each person suffers for his own iniquity; but the Rabbis of the Talmud maintain (Ber. 7a and elsewhere, comp. also Mekilta, ed. Lauterbach, II, 246) that the former applies to cases where the children follow the iniquity of their fathers, hence incur a similar punishment, while the latter applies to cases where the children break away from the evil practices of their fathers and follow the dictates of their own conscience.

10. *mercy]* חסד, especially with reference to God, is better rendered by "kindness" or "loving-kindness," since it expresses a virtue practiced among people of equal rank, while "mercy" implies a quality of renunciation or indulgence on the part of an injured person toward his injurer.

*the thousandth generation]* אלפים, in contrast to שלשים and רבעים of the preceding verse, is evidently hyperbolic. The object is to point out that God's mercy is infinitely greater than His retribution, for while He inflicts punishment upon His adversaries to the third and fourth generation, His kindness to those who venerate Him stretches as far as the thousandth generation.

# 11. THE THIRD COMMANDMENT AGAINST ABUSE OF THE DIVINE NAME.

*take]* נשם really signifies "take up," namely upon the lips (comp. Ps. 16.4), hence utter, pronounce.

in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

- 12 Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD  
 13 thy God commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labour, and  
 14 do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant

*in vain*] i. e. to no good purpose. God's name should not be uttered for frivolous purposes, such as cursing or divination; but it may be employed in oaths for serious purposes, comp. 6.13.

*hold guiltless*] i. e. let go unpunished.

#### 12-15. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT CONCERNING THE SABBATH.

12. *Observe*] שמור is an absolute infinitive with the force of an emphatic imperative, comp. GKC., § 113 bb. Instead of the practical "observe," the parallel passage in Ex. 20.9 has "remember."

*the Sabbath day*] שָׁבָת is derived from a root meaning "to desist" (from work), hence "day of rest," a day free from physical exertion and devoted entirely to religious observance.

*as the Lord thy God commanded thee*] Wanting in Ex. 20.8.

13. *work*] מלאכה has particular reference to man's occupation or business.

14. *in it*] Not expressed in the Hebrew text, but supplied in Samaritan, Septuagint, Peshitta and Vulgate.

*nor thy man-servant*] The copula is wanting in Ex. 20.10.

*stranger*] Concerning גֵּר see on 1.16. Even the foreign sojourner in Israel was to desist from work on the Sabbath day.

*within thy gates*] i. e. in thy cities, comp. Isa. 14.31, where שַׁעַר is parallel to עִיר.

*that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou*] Wanting in Ex. 20.10.

may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that 15  
 thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD  
 thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and  
 by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD thy God com-  
 manded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy 16  
 God commanded thee; that thy days may be long, and  
 that it may go well with thee, upon the land which the  
 LORD thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not murder.

17

15. Instead of this verse, Ex. 20.11 has the following: "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Thus the motive for observing the Sabbath is strictly religious in Exodus, while in Deuteronomy it is also ethical.

#### 16. THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT CONCERNING THE VENERATION OF PARENTS.

*as the Lord thy God commanded thee]* Wanting in Ex. 20.12.  
*and that it may go well with thee]* Not in Exodus.

17. The sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth commandments, comprised within one sentence here in syndetic construction, form each an independent sentence in Ex. 20.13 ff.

#### THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT AGAINST MURDER.

*murder]* רצח has special reference to violent and premeditated homicide. The penalty for such slaying is provided in Gen. 9.6; Ex. 21.12; and Num. 35.16.



Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

Neither shalt thou steal.

Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

- 18 Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's wife; neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.

#### THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT AGAINST ADULTERY.

*commit adultery*] Married life was deemed sacred, the foundation of society and nation, and any attempt to disrupt it was considered a cardinal sin punishable by death, comp. Lev. 20.10.

#### THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT AGAINST THEFT.

*steal*] The Rabbis infer (Sanh. 86a) that this commandment is directed against stealing human beings (kidnaping), which is punishable by death (Ex. 21.16), not against stealing property, for which there is no capital punishment.

#### THE NINTH COMMANDMENT AGAINST FALSE TESTIMONY.

*false witness*] עד שוא properly means "vain or groundless witness." Ex. 20.16 has עד שקר instead. The penalty for such crime is provided in 19.16 ff.

#### 18. THE TENTH COMMANDMENT AGAINST COVETING A NEIGHBOR'S POSSESSIONS.

*Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's wife*] In Ex. 20.17 this clause takes secondary place, after "thy neighbour's house" (which therefore might be construed in the larger sense of "household"); moreover, the copula is wanting there.

*shalt thou desire*] תחמוד, instead of תחמד in Ex. 20.17, though both words have the same connotation.

*his field*] Wanting in Exodus. Perhaps this addition is due to the fact that the Israelites were about to take possession of fields in their new land.

These words the LORD spoke unto all your assembly in 19  
 the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and  
 of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and it went on  
 no more. And He wrote them upon two tables of stone,  
 and gave them unto me. And it came to pass, when ye 20  
 heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while  
 the mountain did burn with fire, that ye came near unto  
 me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; and 21  
 ye said: 'Behold, the LORD our God hath shown us His  
 glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out  
 of the midst of the fire; we have seen this day that God  
 doth speak with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why 22  
 should we die? for this great fire will consume us; if we

19-30. REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE THAT MOSES  
 ADDRESS THEM INSTEAD OF GOD.

19. *These words*] i. e. the ten commandments.

*it went on no more*] i. e. the voice of God was discontinued. This construction is required by the accents accompanying the Hebrew text and is far better than referring the phrase to the Lord at the beginning of the sentence, as is done by Driver.

*and He wrote them*] This act took place later, comp. 9.9 ff., but it is introduced here for the sake of completing the narrative concerning the ten commandments.

20. *while the mountain, etc.*] A circumstantial clause (GKC., § 156d; Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 195 ff.).

*the heads of your tribes*] Comp. 1.15.

*elders*] Men venerated on account of their advanced age and invested with a certain degree of authority.

21. *and he liveth*] Contrary to the general belief that man cannot hear the voice of God and live, see on 4.33.

22. *why should we die*] Yet they fear death if they continue to hear the voice of God.

hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we  
 23 shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard  
 the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of  
 24 the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all  
 that the LORD our God may say; and thou shalt speak  
 unto us all that the LORD our God may speak unto thee;  
 25 and we will hear it, and do it.' And the LORD heard the  
 voice of your words, when ye spoke unto me; and the  
 LORD said unto me: 'I have heard the voice of the words  
 of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they  
 26 have well said all that they have spoken. Oh that they  
 had such a heart as this alway, to fear Me, and keep all  
 My commandments, that it might be well with them, and  
 27 with their children for ever! Go say to them: Return ye

23. *all flesh*] בשר may designate all terrestrial beings possessing life, as, e. g., Gen. 6.17 and 7.21, or only man as a finite earthly creature in contrast to God who is eternal, as Gen. 6.3 and the passage before us.

*living God*] אלהים חיים, in contrast to the inanimate pagan gods, similarly I Sam. 17.26 and 36; Jer. 10.10; 23.36; elsewhere אלהים חי or אל חי.

*and lived*] The same thought is expressed in 4.33.

24. *Go thou near, etc.*] Moses is told to be an intermediary between God and the Israelites.

*and thou*] The femin. אַתָּה should probably be read אַתָּה as masculine.

25. *they have well said. etc.*] Similarly 18.17. God approves of their modesty and humility and voices the hope that they may continue to fear Him and keep all His commandments.

26. *Oh that they had such a heart*] Literally, "who would grant that they have such a heart, etc." RMbN infers from this verse the doctrine of free will, since it is left to man himself to be either good or evil, and he quotes the talmudic saying, "everything is in God's hands except the fear of God" (Ber. 33a and Nid. 16b).

*that it might be well with them*] So 4.40; 5.16, etc.

to your tents. But as for thee, stand thou here by Me, <sup>28</sup>  
 and I will speak unto thee all the commandment, and the  
 statutes, and the ordinances, which thou shalt teach them,  
 that they may do them in the land which I give them to  
 possess it.' Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD <sup>29</sup>  
 your God hath commanded you; ye shall not turn aside to  
 the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the way <sup>30</sup>  
 which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye  
 may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye  
 may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the <sup>6</sup>  
 ordinances, which the LORD your God commanded

27. *Return ye to your tents*] According to Ex. 19.15 they had been away from their tents three days, at an order from God.

28. *stand thou here by Me*] After delivering My message to the people return here and remain with Me, etc. (Ibn Ezra).

*all the commandment, etc.*] מצוה is collective. The reference is no doubt to all the laws and statutes comprised in the Book of Deuteronomy.

*in the land*] These laws are largely dependent upon the possession of a land, hence they apply chiefly to Canaan.

29. *Ye shall observe to do*] Moses now turns from God to the people and exhorts them to observe the commandments of God in practice, without deviating from them in the least.

*ye shall not turn aside, etc.*] So 17.11, 20; 28.14.

30. *that ye may live*] By walking in the way of God, comp. 4.1. *that ye may prolong your days, etc.*] Similarly 4.26 and 40.

## CHAPTER 6.

### 1-3. PREFACE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE HEBREW THEOCRACY.

1. *Now this is the commandment, etc.*] Moses now communicates to Israel the commandments and laws which he received from God, comp. 5.28.

to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go  
 2 over to possess it — that thou mightest fear the LORD thy  
 God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments,  
 which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's  
 son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be  
 3 prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it;  
 that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase  
 mightily, as the LORD, the God of thy fathers, hath pro-  
 mised unto thee — a land flowing with milk and honey.

4 HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.

*to teach you]* Comp. 4.1, 14; 5.28

2. *that thou mightest fear, etc.]* Through fear of God you might keep His commandments and thus prolong your days; similarly 5.26.

3. *Hear . . . and observe to do it]* In accordance with the promise made in 5.24.

*ye may increase]* חרבון, imperfect with archaic ending (Nun paragogicum, see GKC., § 47m).

*hath promised]* Literally "hath spoken". A mighty increase was promised to Israel in Gen. 15.5; 22.17; 26.4; 28.14; Ex. 32.13, etc.

*a land flowing with milk and honey]* This descriptive phrase, which occurs frequently in the Pentateuch, seems to be misplaced here; perhaps it belonged originally to the end of v. 1 (Ibn Ezra), in which case the intervening verses would have to be taken parenthetically.

#### 4-9. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE HEBREW THEOCRACY.

4. Affirmation of the oneness or uniqueness of Israel's God.

*Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one]* This is the fundamental article of the Jewish faith, a declaration of monotheism, which was ordained to be recited in prayer twice daily, morning and evening (known as the *Shema'* in the Prayer Book). The phrase יהוה אחד has been interpreted in various ways. Thus Ibn Ezra advances two different interpretations: one construes the first יהוה as a proper noun and the second יהוה as an attribute, rendering somewhat as follows "the Lord our God is a unique eternal being" (so also Mendelssohn); another construes יהוה both times as a proper noun, אלהינו as

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, 5  
and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these 6  
words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy  
heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy chil- 7  
dren, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy

a predicate, and אלהים in the sense of "alone", rendering thus "the Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (so also RSbM, Luzzatto and Ehrlich). That אלהים is employed in the sense of "alone" is evident from I Chron. 29.1. Another interpretation is "the Lord our God is one Lord" (Schultz, Keil, Dillmann, and others), the purport of the phrase being that Yahweh, the true God, cannot be divided in polytheistic fashion into various kinds (as is the case with Baal, for instance), nor can he be united in syncretistic manner with the gods of other peoples (as, e. g., Zeus of the Greeks or Jupiter of the Romans), but is unique in His manner and being. Curious are the Hebrew majuscules at the end of the first and the last word of the sentence; no doubt they served as a warning to the reader to pronounce these important words distinctly and without the slightest slur. This is borne out by the talmudic saying (Ber. 15b) "whoever pronounces the *Shema*' distinctly—Gehenna is made cooler for him".

5. Since you have no other God but Yahweh it is your bounden duty to love Him with all your being.

*with all thy heart, etc.*] See on 4.29.

*with all thy might*] Similarly II Kings 23.25. The Talmud (Sanh. 74a and elsewhere) explains the phrase as meaning "with all thy money", i. e. even if you have to part from all your property on account of your love of God.

6. *these words*] Namely the words in the preceding two verses inculcating love for the one and only God.

*upon thy heart*] i. e. impressed on your heart.

7. *and thou shalt teach them diligently*] ושיננתם properly means "and thou shalt sharpen them", whence BDB., s. v., render "teach them incisively". Ehrlich associates it with the Arabic word *sunna* meaning "life rule", rendering "and thou shalt teach them to thy children as a life rule".

*shalt talk of them*] viz. always, wherever you are, so that they may never be forgotten.

house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou  
 8 liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind  
 them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for front-  
 9 lets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon  
 the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

8. *And thou shalt bind them, etc.*] Similarly 11.18 and Ex. 13.16. These precious and memorable words are to be worn as an ornament on the hands and between the eyes, as an ever-present memorial of the close relationship existing between God and Israel. Originally used figuratively, these expressions later assumed a literal interpretation, the sign on the hand being made to denote a phylactery on the biceps of the left arm (תפלין של יד) and the frontlets between the eyes a phylactery on the forehead (תפלין של ראש). Each of these phylacteries contains four sections from the Pentateuch inscribed on scrolls of parchment: Ex. 13.1-10 and 11-16; Deut. 6.4-9 and 11.13-21. The exact date of the literal interpretation cannot be determined, but it is found already in the Mishna (Ber. 3.3; Meg. 1.8, etc.).

*frontlets*] תוטפות, the etymology of which is uncertain, may have denoted originally "bands round the head" or some kind of "head-tire"; its technical sense of phylacteries it did not assume until a later date.

9. *And thou shalt write them, etc.*] Similarly 11.20. This expression, too, may have been metaphorical originally, but later it was construed literally and gave rise to the custom of the *mezuzah* (Mishna, *ibid.*), which consists in affixing a small metal cylinder enclosing a parchment inscribed with Deut. 6.4-9 and 11.13-21 to the upper part of the right hand door-post in every Jewish home. This custom, which has been traced back to the ancient Egyptians, is found also among the Arabs, who like to inscribe verses from the Koran upon the doors of their dwellings.

And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall bring 10  
 thee into the land which He swore unto thy fathers, to  
 Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee — great and  
 goodly cities, which thou didst not build, and houses full 11  
 of all good things, which thou didst not fill, and cisterns  
 hewn out, which thou didst not hew, vineyards and olive-  
 trees, which thou didst not plant, and thou shalt eat and  
 be satisfied — then beware lest thou forget the LORD, who 12  
 brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the  
 house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; 13

**10-15. AN APPEAL TO ISRAEL NOT TO FORGET GOD AFTER IT  
 HAD GROWN WEALTHY IN ITS NEW LAND (SIMILARLY 8.7-18).**

**10.** *He swore*] Comp. 1.8.

*great and goodly cities*] This is a reference to the advanced civilization of Canaan at the time of Israel's entrance, a fact which is confirmed by recent excavations in Palestine.

*which thou didst not build*] i. e. without any effort on your part. The underlying idea is that wealth acquired without effort leads to refractoriness.

**11.** A summary description of the agricultural civilization of which the Israelites are about to become heirs: well furnished houses, properly built cisterns, carefully planted vineyards and olive-trees, etc.

*cisterns hewn out*] Cisterns for the storage of water during the hot season are of especial value in Palestine, where the drought lasts from the beginning of May to the end of October.

*and be satisfied*] i. e. to the point of satiety and surfeit, similarly 8.12; 11.15; 31.20. Sifre on 11.15 offers numerous examples to prove that satiety leads to overbearing and backsliding.

**12.** *beware*] So 4.9.



- and Him shalt thou serve, and by His name shalt thou  
 14 swear. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of  
 15 the peoples that are round about you; for a jealous God,  
 even the LORD thy God, is in the midst of thee; lest the  
 anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and  
 He destroy thee from off the face of the earth.
- 16 Ye shall not try the LORD your God, as ye tried Him in  
 17 Massah. Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of

13. *serve*] עָבַד "work, serve" with reference to God implies a definite act of worship involving sacrifice and prayer, comp. Ex. 3.12; 13.5, etc. This verb gave rise to the noun עֲבֹדָה used as a technical term for the religious performances of the priests and Levites (Num. 4.47, etc.) and also for the liturgical services in Temple and Synagogue.

*by His name shalt thou swear*] i. e. in solemn oaths. One may not invoke the name of God for frivolous purposes (see above on 5.11); but in serious affairs, as when one is required to take an oath for verification, God's name may be used. Jeremiah even urges people to swear in truth by the name of the Lord (12.16), to counteract the evil influence of those who swear by the name of Baal.

14. *go after*] i. e. follow the precepts of other gods.  
*of the gods, etc.*] i. e. the numerous Baalim that infested every city of the Canaanites on both sides of the Jordan.

15. *a jealous God*] See on 4.24.

*in the midst of thee*] At Massah the Israelites doubted whether God was in their midst (Ex. 17.7), hence the emphasis here that God dwells in their midst and is ready to benefit or punish them according to their deeds.

**16-19. A WARNING NOT TO PUT GOD TO TEST BUT  
 RATHER TO FOLLOW HIM FAITHFULLY FOR ONE'S OWN GOOD.**

16. *Massah*] A name meaning "testing", also called Meribah meaning "strife", because in this locality supposedly situated at Horeb, near Rephidim, the Israelites strove with Moses for water and in their unbelief put God to test to produce water through a miracle, by striking a rock (Ex. 17.1-7).

the LORD your God, and His testimonies, and His statutes, which He hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that 18 which is right and good in the sight of the LORD; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to thrust out all thine enemies from before thee, 19 as the LORD hath spoken.

When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying: 20 'What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?' then thou shalt say unto thy son: 'We were Pharaoh's 21 bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the LORD showed signs and 22 wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and

17. *testimonies, etc.*] See on 4.45.

18. *that which is right and good*] So also 12.28; II Chron. 14.1 and 31.20; but ordinarily without "and good".

19. *to thrust out*] Properly "while you thrust out", since לְהַרְף, a rare word occurring in this sense only twice more (9.4 and Josh. 23.5), is an infinitive construct expressing attendant circumstances (corresponding therefore to our gerund) and harks back to וּבָאתָ in the preceding verse (comp. GKC., § 114o).

#### 20-25. INSTRUCTION OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IN THE LAW OF GOD.

20. *When thy son, etc.*] Similarly Ex. 13.14, where, however, this section opens with וְהָיָה "and it shall be".

*in time to come*] Literally 'to-morrow', in the sense of the near future.

*the testimonies, etc.*] See on 4.45.

21. *brought us out, etc.*] Comp. Ex. 13.14.

22. *signs and wonders*] See on 4.34.

23 upon all his house, before our eyes. And He brought us  
 out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us  
 24 the land which He swore unto our fathers. And the LORD  
 commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD  
 our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us  
 25 alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be righteousness  
 unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before  
 the LORD our God, as He hath commanded us.'

7 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land  
 whither thou goest to possess it, and shall cast out many

23. *And He brought us out*] The Hebrew text puts "us" at the very beginning of the sentence, for the sake of emphasis.

*bring us in*] The last particle is really not expressed in the Hebrew text, which seems to lack the place of destination: הָבִיא would ordinarily require אֶל הָאָרֶץ as a sequent. Perhaps Hoffmann is right in his suggestion that הָבִיא could be combined by zeugma with אֶת הָאָרֶץ of the following clause, the accusative being explained as an accusative of place.

24. *might preserve us alive*] See 4.1.

25. *righteousness*] צְדָקָה here denotes "merit" (so Targum), i. e. a merit that deserves God's reward, similarly 24.13 and Gen. 15.6.

*before the Lord our God*] This phrase should properly be connected with the first clause, "and it shall be righteousness unto us", as in 24.13.

## CHAPTER 7.

### 1-5 EXTIRPATION OF THE NATIVE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN.

1. *cast out*] Transitive נָשַׁל, properly "strip or clear away", is used only twice more with reference to human beings: below v. 22 and II Kings 16.6.

nations before thee, the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and

*Hittite*] The Kheta of Egyptian and Hatti of Assyrian monuments. These Hittites, mentioned numerous times in the Bible, were of Indo-European stock and had their center on the Anatolian plateau in Asia Minor, in the neighborhood of the Taurus range, more precisely inside the great bend of the Halys river. About the beginning of the second millennium B. C. E. they developed a mighty empire and in their aggressiveness invaded Babylonia towards the east and Syria towards the south, establishing a number of powerful kingdoms and principalities as far as southern Palestine. Here they are found already in the days of Abraham (Gen. 23.3 ff.). About 1750 their power declined, but about 1400 they regained their former commanding position under one of the ablest rulers of the ancient Near East, a man who bore the long name Subbiluliuma. This soldier king crushed the Mitanni across the Euphrates and with them the Assyrians, conquered all of Syria and even threatened the mighty empire of the Egyptians. Assyrian and Egyptian inscriptions of this period refer particularly to the Hittite power in northern Syria, centered at Kadesh on the river Orontes. However, with the death of Subbiluliuma the power of the Hittites began to decline once more, never to rise again. Only remnants of this once powerful race are met with here and there in Palestine as late as the time of Kings, these survivals being due partly to intermingling with the Hebrews through intermarriage.

*Girgashite*] Though mentioned several times in the Bible, nothing positive is known about this Canaanite tribe.

*Amorite* . . . . . *Canaanite*] See on 1.7.

*Perizzite*] According to Josh. 17.15 and Judg. 1.4 f., this tribe was domiciled in the center of Palestine, in the vicinity of Bethel and Shechem. The name פְּרִיזִי, as pointed out on 3.5, probably signifies "dweller in open, unfortified places". From the fact that this name is not mentioned among the descendants of Canaan in Gen. 10.15 ff., it has been suggested by some commentators (Dillmann, etc.) that the Perizzites may have been the survivors of the pre-Canaanitish inhabitants of Palestine, who had been expelled from their strongholds by the Canaanite invaders and consequently continued their precarious existence beside their conquerors in the open country.

the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations greater and  
 2 mightier than thou; and when the LORD thy God shall  
 deliver them up before thee, and thou shalt smite them;  
 then thou shalt utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no  
 3 covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them; neither  
 shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou

*Hivite*] The locale of the Hivites (meaning "men who live in villages"?) seems to have been around Shechem and Gibeon (Gen. 34.2; Josh. 9.7 and 11.19). According to a recent theory (Speiser, *Mesopotamian Origins*, p. 132), Hivite may be a scribal error for Horite, concerning whom see on 2.12.

*Jebusite*] This tribe was grouped around Jerusalem, which formed its stronghold and was not captured until the days of David (Josh. 18.28; Judg. 1.21; II Sam. 5.6).

*seven nations*] This number appears only here, Josh. 3.10 and 24.11; elsewhere the number varies between three and six. However, the discrepancy need not be explained on the sole basis that the purpose of these enumerations is rhetorical rather than geographical and historical (Driver), but rather for the obvious reason that the briefer lists contain only the chief tribes, while the more detailed lists include also minor alongside with the major tribes.

*greater and mightier than thou*] Comp. 4.38; 9.1; 11.23.

2. *thou shalt utterly destroy them*] Literally "put to the *herem* or ban", see on 2.34. The term *herem* in Hebrew, as is evident from Arabic, denoted a mode of separating or secluding anything endangering the religious life of the people and presenting it to the sanctuary, either to be used for lawful purposes or else to be destroyed. This institution was applied particularly for the purpose of wiping out idolatry, hence it was directed also against the idolatrous Canaanites, as in the passage before us and 20.16 ff., or against idolatrous Israelites, as in 13.13 ff. and Ex. 22.19.

*make no covenant*] So Ex. 23.32; 34.12. For the exact meaning of the phrase see on 4.13.

3. *make marriages with them*] Literally "make thyself a son-in-law". A similar warning against intermarriage with the native inhabitants is found in Ex. 34.16 and Josh. 23.12. That this danger

shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For he will turn away thy son from 4 following Me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and He will destroy thee quickly. But thus shall ye deal with them: ye 5 shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars,

existed is evident from later intermarriages between the Hebrews and the natives, traces of which are scattered throughout the Bible, but particularly in the Book of Ezra. It was, no doubt, this illegitimate intermingling with the native races that gave rise to Ezekiel's incisive taunt to Jerusalem, "thy father was the Amorite and thy mother was a Hittite" (16.3).

4. *he will turn away thy son*] The non-Israelite will lead thy son to idolatry by offering him his idolatrous daughter for a wife. Another interpretation is found in the Talmud (Kid. 68b): by marrying an Israelite daughter the non-Israelite will lead the offspring of his marriage (=thy son) to idolatry.

*Me*] Refers to God, though spoken by Moses; similarly 11.14 f.; 17.3, etc.

5. *break down their altars, etc.*] Similarly Ex. 34.13.

*altars*] מִזְבֵּחַ, properly "a place of slaughter or sacrifice", was an elevated structure of various material (earth, stone, or metal) and different shape (oblong, conical, or spherical) on which incense was burned or sacrifices offered to the deity. Many such altars have been unearthed in recent excavations in Palestine, comp. J. Garrow Duncan, *Digging Up Biblical History*, II, 66 ff. Natural rock altars, too, have been uncovered in the mountain fastnesses of Petra in Idumea, comp. Alexander B. W. Kennedy, *Petra Its History and Monuments*, London, 1925, pp. 61 ff., and George Livingston Robinson, *The Sarcophagus of an Ancient Civilization*, New York, 1930, pp. 126 ff. Good reproductions and detailed descriptions of these altars may be found in Kurt Galling's *Der Altar in den Kulturen des Alten Orients*, Berlin, 1925.

*pillars*] מַצֵּבָה, literally "standing-stone", was an oblong block of stone which in the conception of the people constituted the seat of a deity. It was generally set up near an altar or temple in high places. Numerous such pillars had been erected by the Canaanites for the

and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven  
 6 images with fire. For thou art a holy people unto the  
 LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be  
 His own treasure, out of all peoples that are upon the face

worship of Baal, and some of them have been uncovered in recent excavations at Gezer, Taanach, and Megiddo (comp. Duncan, op. cit., pp. 58 ff., also Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*<sup>6</sup>, pp. 214 ff.).

*Asherim*] Plural of *asherah*, a sacred wooden trunk which stood by the altar in Canaanite places of worship. It is generally assumed that this wooden post was a conventional substitute for an original sacred tree, which represented the dwelling of a deity. At least the Septuagint renders אֲשֵׁרָה uniformly by "sacred tree". Recent excavations have revealed a goodly number of such *Asherim* around temples dedicated to Baal worship (Duncan, op. cit., pp. 43 ff.). Some scholars claim that *Asherah* really refers to an old Semitic goddess by that name, similar or not to the goddess Ashtoreth, of which the post was but a wooden symbol (comp., for instance, Kuenen, *The Religion of Israel*, II, 88), but this view has been ably refuted by W. R. Smith (*Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, pp. 187 ff. and 560 ff.), and others.

#### 6-11. A DECLARATION ABOUT THE HOLINESS OF ISRAEL.

6. *a holy people*] Similarly 14.2, 21; 26.19; 28.9, all based on Ex. 19.5 f. and perhaps also on what is known as the Law of Holiness in Leviticus (chapters 17-26). Hebr. קָדוֹשׁ meant originally "separated", something set apart for ceremonial and sacred use; only in course of time, with the refinement of the religious and moral conception, did the word come to denote the idea of absolute sanctity and purity.

*chose*] Similarly 4.37; 10.15; 14.2. Hence the term "chosen people", frequently occurring in the prophetic books (Isa. 41.8 f.; 43.10; 44.1 f.; 45.4; Jer. 33.24; Am. 3.2, etc.).

*His own treasure*] חֵן קָנָה really means "a people of unique value," a people prized as a treasure-trove by God; comp. Eccl. 2.8 and I Chron. 29.3, where סֹלוֹה is used of a private treasure belonging to kings. The rendering of the Revised Version "a peculiar people" harks back to the Latin word *peculium*, which originally meant "property in cattle", but subsequently came to denote "property" in general, particularly "private property".

of the earth. The LORD did not set His love upon you, 7  
 nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any  
 people — for ye were the fewest of all peoples — but 8  
 because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep  
 the oath which He swore unto your fathers, hath the  
 LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed  
 you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh  
 king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, 9  
 He is God; the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and  
 mercy with them that love Him and keep His command-

7. *set His love upon you*]  $\text{אָהַב}$  is used of a strong attachment, such as exists between man and woman and is marked by an intense desire for one another. As such an attachment the moral union between God and Israel has been pictured repeatedly by the prophets, Hosea going even to the extent of applying to it the figure of the marriage-tie (chapters 1-3).

*the fewest of all peoples*] The other peoples being greater and mightier than you, comp. above v. 1; 4.38; 9.1; 11.23. This is in contrast to 4.6 and 26.5, where Israel is pictured as a great nation.

8. *because the Lord loved you*] So below v. 13 and 23.6. With Israel's love to God (6.5) Deuteronomy stresses God's love to Israel, which is likewise a favorite theme of Hosea (chapters 1-3 and 11.1 ff.), and recurs also in Isaiah (43.4; 63.9), Jeremiah (31.3), and Malachi (1.2).

*the oath*] See on 1.8.

*redeemed you*] Technically  $\text{פָּדָה}$  signifies "to ransom" a person or animal from death, either through a substitute or through payment of money; but it is used also figuratively, as here, for delivering from misery or trouble of any kind.

#### 9-10. AN ELABORATION OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF THE DECALOGUE (5.9-10).

9. *He is God*] So 4.35 and 39.

*the faithful God*] Who always keeps His promise.  $\text{אֱמֻנָה}$  is an attribute of God which may also be expressed by the word  $\text{חַסֵּד}$  in the genitive, as, e. g., Ex. 34.6.

*mercy*] See on 5.10.



10 ments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them; He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his  
11 face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them.

12 And it shall come to pass, because ye hearken to these ordinances, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep with thee the covenant and the mercy which  
13 He swore unto thy fathers, and He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee; He will also bless the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land, thy corn and thy

*to a thousand generations]* לאלף דור instead of לאלפים of 5.10 and Ex. 20.6, but the meaning is the same; see on 5.10.

10. *to their face]* i. e. in their own person. The evil-doer might comfort himself by the consideration that punishment will not overtake him in his life-time, but through his descendants up to the fourth generation (comp. 5.9), hence the double emphasis here that destruction will reach his own person, irrespective of what may happen to his descendants.

11. The deduction: Therefore be careful in practicing the commandments, and the statutes, and the ordinances, given to you by God.

#### 12-16. ISRAEL'S OBEDIENCE IS TO BE REWARDED BY WEALTH AND HEALTH.

12. *because]* Literally "as a consequence of" or "in reward for" your obedience, so also 8.20.

*shall keep with thee, etc.]* So above v. 9.

13. *the fruit of thy body]* Rather "the fruit of thy womb", i. e. thy offspring; similarly 28.4, 11, 18, 51, 53; 30.9, etc.

wine and thine oil, the increase of thy kine and the young of thy flock, in the land which He swore unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all peoples; 14 there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from 15 thee all sickness; and He will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee, but will lay

*corn ... wine ... oil*] The three most important products of Palestine's soil, hence they are frequently named together, as 11.14; 12.17; 14.23; 18.4; 28.51, and elsewhere. The Hebrew terms used denote the products in a raw state: דגן is corn which has been threshed out (Num. 18.27), but is not as refined as חטים; חירוש, though intoxicating (Hos. 4.11), is new wine or must that has not gone through the full process of fermentation like יין; יצהר is fresh oil, crude and unrefined, in contrast to שמן which is a finished product.

*the increase of thy kine*] More correctly "the offspring of thy kine". Though rare in Hebrew (occurring only here and 28.4, 18, 51), שור is sufficiently substantiated in Aramaic as meaning "offspring".

*the young of thy flock*] עֲשֹׁרֶת צֹאן, literally "the Ashtoreths of thy flock"; similarly 28.4, 18, 51. The word *Ashtoreth* is of peculiar usage here: elsewhere it is the name of the Semitic goddess Ashtoreth or Astarte. According to W. R. Smith (*Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 310 and 477), this goddess must have been associated in some way with sheep or may have had originally the form of a sheep, a kind of sheep-Aphrodite who was specially worshiped in Cyprus, where her annual mystic or piacular sacrifice was a sheep presented by worshipers clad in sheepskins, thus declaring their kinship at once with the victim and with the deity. Menahem ben Saruk renders the phrase by "the choicest of the flock", though suggesting at the same time that the goddess Astarte may have assumed the shape of a sheep (*Mahbereth Menahem*, ed. Filipowski, s. v.).

14. *female barren*] So Ex. 23.26.

15. *all sickness*] Similarly Ex. 23.25.

*evil diseases of Egypt*] Similarly Ex. 15.26. The reference is probably to diseases peculiar to Egypt, such as elephantiasis, dysentery and ophthalmia.

- 16 them upon all them that hate thee. And thou shalt consume all the peoples that the LORD thy God shall deliver unto thee; thine eye shall not pity them; neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.
- 17 If thou shalt say in thy heart: "These nations are more  
 18 than I; how can I dispossess them?" thou shalt not be afraid of them; thou shalt well remember what the LORD  
 19 thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt: the great trials which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out; so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the peoples of whom thou art  
 20 afraid. Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet

16. *consume*] Similarly Jer. 10.25; 30.16; 50.7. This is a figure of speech borrowed from the act of eating and based on the notion that the native inhabitants are "bread" to be consumed by the invading Israelites (Num. 14.9).

*thine eye shall not pity them*] The same idiom in 13.9; 19.13, 21; 25.12.

*serve their gods, etc.*] Similarly Ex. 23.33.

#### 17-26. ANOTHER EXHORTATION TO EXTERMINATE THE NATIONS OF CANAAN AND THEIR IDOLS.

17. *dispossess them*] Strictly speaking, להוריש means "to cause them to possess or inherit", but by an association of ideas due probably to the fact that causing someone to take possession of new property implies depriving him of his old property, the term came to be used also as an antonym "to dispossess". Such antonyms are not uncommon in the Bible, comp. E. Landau, *Die gegensinnigen Wörter im Alt- und Neuhebräischen*, Berlin, 1896.

19. *trials, etc.*] See on 4.34.

20. *hornet*] So also Ex. 23.28 and Josh. 24.12. The exact meaning of צרעה is not quite certain. It appears to be some terrible plague overpowering those that are left and those that hide themselves, hence

among them, until they that are left, and they that hide themselves, perish from before thee. Thou shalt not be 21  
affrighted at them; for the LORD thy God is in the midst of thee, a God great and awful. And the LORD thy God will 22  
cast out those nations before thee by little and little; thou mayest not consume them quickly, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the LORD thy God shall 23

Ibn Janah's rendering "pestilence". Ibn Ezra equates it with צרעא "leprosy". The objection to "hornet" lies in the consideration that this is not potent enough as an ally of Israel in the expulsion and extermination of the Canaanites. Hornets, which are distinguished from wasps by their larger size, are quite abundant in Palestine. Of the four species found there, two are said to build their nests underground or in the interstices of rocks. They generally attack in swarms and with great fury when their nests are disturbed (Tristram, *The Natural History of the Bible*<sup>20</sup>, p. 322). Some commentators construe צרעא metaphorically; equating it with Assyrian *širu* meaning "serpent" and applying it to the sacred serpent or uraeus on the crown of the Pharaoh, they assume the allusion to be to some early invasion of Canaan by the Egyptians, an invasion which naturally made the task of the Israelites easier. Recently Garstang (*The Foundations of Bible History*, pp. 258 ff.) pointed out that the hornet was a symbol of Pharaoh's rule, more specifically the badge of Thotmes III and his successors, and consequently he interprets our passage to mean that prior to Israel's entrance into Canaan Egypt's policy of tyranny and spoliation devastated that country, thus paving the way for Israel's successful invasion.

21. *Thou shalt not be affrighted*] So 1.29.

*in the midst of thee*] So 6.15; comp. also 1.30.

*great and awful*] So 10.17.

22. *cast out*] See above on v. 1.

*by little and little*] i. e. gradually, not in a fixed time; similarly Ex. 23.30.

*quickly*] Corresponds to "one year" in Ex. 23.29.

*lest, etc.*] i. e. lest the place become depopulated and deserted to such an extent as to invite beasts.

- deliver them up before thee, and shall discomfit them with  
 24 a great discomfiture, until they be destroyed. And He shall  
 deliver their kings into thy hand, and thou shalt make  
 their name to perish from under heaven; there shall no  
 man be able to stand against thee, until thou have de-  
 25 stroyed them. The graven images of their gods shall ye  
 burn with fire; thou shalt not covet the silver or the gold  
 that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared  
 therein; for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God.  
 26 And thou shalt not bring an abomination into thy house,

23. *discomfit*] Similarly Ex. 23.27. The word דָּחַק is vocalized as though it were derived from דָּחַק "murmur, roar", suggested probably by the following מְדַחֵק. Actually the verb in use for "discomfit" is דָּחַק, which would require here the uncontracted form דָּחַקְתָּ (comp. II Chron. 15.6) or the contracted form דָּחַק (which is avoided in the Bible). There are numerous instances of confusion between defective verbs in biblical Hebrew, particularly in the case of the analogous and closely related verbs mediae waw and mediae geminatae (GKC., § 72 dd).

24. *He shall deliver their kings*] For the fulfillment of these promises comp. Josh. 10.22 ff.; 11.12; 12.7 ff.

*make their name to perish, etc.*] Similarly 9.14; 25.19; 29.19.

*to stand against thee*] So also 11.25.

*until thou have destroyed them*] דָּחַק is an anomalous form of the infinitive construct, the regular form requiring a pathah under the first letter (GKC., § 531).

25. *The graven images, etc.*] As above v. 5.

*the silver or the gold that is on them*] The framework of the idols, generally made of wood, was overlaid with costly metals, especially silver and gold, comp. Isa. 30.22; 40.19; Hab. 2.19.

*snared therein*] Better "snared through it", i. e. through the silver or gold covering the idol.

*an abomination*] תּוֹעֵבָה, a term used frequently in Deuteronomy (12.31; 18.12, etc.), denotes something very hateful and abhorrent, and is applied particularly to idols, which naturally were very offensive to God.

and be accursed like unto it; thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a devoted thing.

All the commandment which I command thee this day 8 shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which 2 the LORD thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might afflict thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He afflicted thee, and 3

26. *be accursed*] Literally "become a devoted thing" like the silver or gold, which by metonymy stands for the idol.

*utterly detest it*] קָרַח is employed with reference to unclean food, as in Lev. 11.11; 20.25, etc., and idolatrous practices, as here, on a par with קָדַשׁ.

*a devoted thing*] i. e. set apart for destruction.

## CHAPTER 8.

### 1-7. ANOTHER MOTIVE FOR OBSERVING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS: THE EXPERIENCES IN THE WILDERNESS.

1. Renewed exhortation to keep God's commandments, the reward being longevity and prosperity.

*All the commandment*] i. e. all the laws contained in Deuteronomy, similarly 11.8, 22; 15.5; 19.9; 27.1.

*observe to do*] So 5.1.

*that ye may live, etc.*] Similarly 4.1; 5.30; 6.3.

2. *these forty years*] So 2.7.

*afflict thee, etc.*] So also below, v. 16. The Israelites, in their travels through the wilderness, were afflicted with all sorts of privations, such as hunger and thirst, in order to put them to test and ascertain their real attitude towards God and His commandments.

suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth  
 4 of the LORD doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.  
 5 And thou shalt consider in thy heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.  
 6 And thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy

3. *manna*] The episode of the manna, which taught Israel its absolute dependence on God, is narrated in Exodus, chapter 16.

*thou knewest not, etc.*] The manna was an unknown kind of food, comp. Ex. 16.15. Modern research established the fact that the biblical manna was a saccharine exudation of the tamarisk tree found abundantly in the Sinai Peninsula, comp. the most recent scientific account of F. S. Bodenheimer and O. Theodor in *Ergebnisse der Sinai-Expedition 1927 der Hebräischen Universität, Leipzig*, 1929, pp. 45-90.

*man doth not live by bread only, etc.*] For manna was something different from bread, yet the Hebrews lived by it all the years of their wanderings in the wilderness (Ex. 16.35). The phrase received also a didactic interpretation: man does not live by material food alone, by the natural products of the earth, but also by spiritual nourishment, by the religious and ethical teachings of God.

4. *Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee*] So also 29.4. A further sign of God's solicitude for Israel: In addition to food He provided them with durable clothing, i. e. clothing that endured through a miracle (Rashi), or with enough clothes from Egypt to last for forty years (Ibn Ezra).

*swell*] Literally "swell like dough" from the exertion of wandering, as happens to people walking barefoot (Rashi). Ibn Janah derives בָּצָק from an Arabic word meaning "barefoot".

5. *chasteneth*] With love as an underlying motive. The wilderness was considered a place of discipline, where God educated Israel to

God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him. For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and

its religious and moral duties as a father educates his child to proper behavior in life.

6. *to walk in His ways, etc.*] Elsewhere this phrase is coupled with love of God, comp. 11.22 and 30.16.

7-20. ANOTHER WARNING NOT TO FORGET GOD IN THE  
ENJOYMENT OF PROSPERITY IN CANAAN (SEE 6.10 ff.).

7-9. A GLOWING DESCRIPTION OF CANAAN AND ITS  
UNEXAMPLED NATURAL RESOURCES.

7. *brooks of water*] נחל corresponds to the Arabic *wady*, which is applied both to a perennial stream and to a valley with only a winter torrent.

*fountains*] i. e. springs of living water, as distinct from cisterns.

*depths*] i. e. subterranean waters, see on 4.18.

*springing forth, etc.*] "The phenomenon is due to the limestone formation of the land, the larger outbursts occurring mainly at the foot of a hill or great mound, where the harder dolomitic limestone impenetrable by water comes to the surface, forcing the water out. Where the softer cretaceous strata lie deep, the water sinks through them and fountains are either scanty or altogether lacking" (George Adam Smith in his Commentary ad loc.). On the hydrography of Palestine comp. Robinson, *Physical Geography of the Holy Land*, Boston, 1865, chapter II; Trelawney Saunders, *An Introduction to the Survey of Western Palestine*, London, 1881; G. A. Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 76 ff., 657 ff.

*valleys*] בקעה really denotes a cleft between two hills.

8. *wheat and barley*] These two staple products may have been characteristic of Palestine in the past, but they are not so now. Comp. G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, I, 298 f.



fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey;  
 9 a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness,  
 thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones  
 are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

*vines and fig-trees and pomegranates*] These fruit-trees are very characteristic of the Judean plateau and their products still form the chief staple products of Palestine. As to their distribution, comp. Smith, *op. cit.*, I, 299 ff.

*olive-trees*] זית שמן means literally "the olive of oil", i. e. the cultivated and grafted olive, as distinguished from the wild olive, known as זית יצחק (II Kings 18.32). Comp. Tristram, *The Natural History of the Bible*<sup>10</sup>, pp. 375 ff.

*honey*] Canaan was known as a country flowing with milk and honey, comp. 6.3 and Ex. 3.8, 17. See also Tristram, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

9. *without scarceness*] An allusion to the scarcity of bread among the desert nomads, who generally regard even bread as a luxury.

*whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass*] Some scholars maintain that the geological facts of Palestine do not justify this promise to Israel of iron and brass. As a matter of fact, the sources of these metals for Palestine were Cyprus, the Lebanon mountains, Edom and northern Arabia. Thus Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, VIII, 2) speaks of the Iron Mountain running as far as Moabitis, and the Letter of Aristaeas states that both iron and copper were brought from the mountains of Arabia before the Persian period. Traces of extensive copper mines were discovered in recent years in the Peninsula of Sinai. But perhaps what is meant here is not iron and brass in the modern sense of these words. ברזל was probably a hard iron-like basalt, containing about one fifth of iron, which was used for various domestic purposes; it was abundant around the Lake of Tiberias, in parts of Moab, and here and there west of the Jordan (comp. Hull, *Geology and Geography of Palestine*, pp. 93 ff.). As to נחשת, it could hardly have meant brass, which is an alloy of copper with about 30 per cent. of zinc: it really denotes either "bronze", an alloy of copper and tin, or copper in its pure state. Canon Phythian-Adams claims (in the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration*

And thou shalt eat and be satisfied, and bless the LORD 10  
thy God for the good land which He hath given thee.  
Beware lest thou forget the LORD thy God, in not keeping 11  
His commandments, and His ordinances, and His statutes,  
which I command thee this day; lest when thou hast eaten 12  
and art satisfied, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt  
therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and 13  
thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou  
hast is multiplied; then thy heart be lifted up, and thou 14  
forget the LORD thy God, who brought thee forth out of  
the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; who led 15  
thee through the great and dreadful wilderness, wherein

Fund for July 1933, pp. 137 ff.) that our verse proves beyond any doubt that Israel had possession some time of the Arabah south of Palestine, where alone brass was obtainable from copper mines. He is of the opinion that for two periods of Israelite history, from David to Jehoshaphat, and again from Uzziah to Ahaz, the Arabah was in the hands of the Hebrews, and might even have been reckoned as Hebrew territory. From these mines in the Arabah Solomon is said to have obtained his copper ore and minerals and his wealth generally. The view of Canon Phythian-Adams is corroborated by the most recent explorer of the Arabah, Prof. Nelson Glueck, in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 55 (September, 1934), p. 10.

10. *bless the Lord*] According to Jewish tradition, this verse contains the commandment to recite the blessing for food (ברכת המזון), consisting of three and then of four benedictions) after each meal.

11. *Beware, etc.*] Similarly 6.12.

12-13. Description of an advanced agricultural state: abundance of food, erection of goodly houses, multiplication of herds and flocks, and as a consequence an increase of silver and gold and everything of value.

14. *thy heart be lifted up*] Comp. 17.20 and Hos. 13.6.

15. *the great and dreadful wilderness*] See on 1.19.

were serpents, fiery serpents, and scorpions, and thirsty ground where was no water; who brought thee forth water  
 16 out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not; that He might afflict thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee  
 17 good at thy latter end; and thou say in thy heart: 'My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this  
 18 wealth.' But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth; that He may establish His covenant which He swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

*serpents*] נחש in the Bible denotes both poisonous and non-poisonous snakes. The reference here is no doubt to poisonous snakes.

*fiery serpents*] שרף, so Num. 21.6 (in the plural), where Midrash rabba explains the name through the burning effect of the reptile's poison; comp. also Isa. 14.29 and 30.6. Some think that it is related to an Egyptian or Assyrian word of similar sound denoting dragon, griffin, or the like, mythologically conceived as deities (BDB., s. v.).

*scorpions*] עקרב is a small invertebrate animal with a sting in its tail which inflicts great pain. There are eight different species of scorpion in Palestine (Tristram, op. cit., p. 303).

*thirsty ground*] צמאון, so also Isa. 35.7 and Ps. 107.33.

*rock of flint*] צור החלמיש, similarly 32.13 in reversed order. Ex. 17.6, on which our passage is based, has only צור "rock".

16. *manna*] See above on v. 3.

*afflict thee, etc.*] Comp. above v. 2.

*at thy latter end*] The allusion is apparently to the time of Israel's entrance into Canaan.

17. *say in thy heart, etc.*] You might think that your wealth is due solely to your own effort.

18. As a matter of fact God is the author of your prosperity, and He showers you with goods not because of your own merit, but because of the covenant which He concluded with your forefathers.

And it shall be, if thou shalt forget the LORD thy God, 19  
and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship  
them, I forewarn you this day that ye shall surely perish.  
As the nations that the LORD maketh to perish before you, 20  
so shall ye perish; because ye would not hearken unto the  
voice of the LORD your God.

Hear, O Israel: thou art to pass over the Jordan this 9  
day, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier  
than thyself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, a 2  
people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom thou  
knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say: 'Who can  
stand before the sons of Anak?' Know therefore this day, 3  
that the LORD thy God is He who goeth over before thee as  
a devouring fire; He will destroy them, and He will bring

19-20. Resumé of the preceding arguments: if Israel follows after  
other gods, it, too, will be utterly destroyed like the nations which  
God is now wiping out before it; similarly 4.25 f.

19. *I forewarn you, etc.*] Similarly 4.26.

20. *As the nations*] i. e. the Amorites, Bashanites, Canaanites, etc.

## CHAPTER 9.

### 1-6. A WARNING AGAINST SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. *greater and mightier than thyself*] Similarly 4.38; 7.1; 11.23.  
*cities great and fortified up to heaven*] See on 1.28.

2. *Anakim*] See on 1.28.

*thou hast heard*] Namely from the report of the spies, comp. Num.  
13.28.

*can stand*] i. e. can hold one's ground.

3. *He who goeth over before thee*] Similarly 1.30.

*a devouring fire*] So 4.24. The phrase here takes the form of an  
implicit accusative (GKC., § 118q; Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 203f.).

them down before thee; so shalt thou drive them out, and make them to perish quickly, as the LORD hath spoken  
 4 unto thee. Speak not thou in thy heart, after that the LORD thy God hath thrust them out from before thee, saying: 'For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land'; whereas for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.  
 5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go in to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may establish the word which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham,

*quickly*] This is hardly in conflict with 7.22, which states that God will cast out the hostile nations little by little, for here the reference is evidently to the organized and belligerent power of those nations, which has to be destroyed for the safety of the invader, while there the peaceful population is meant, men and women who go about their daily tasks and contribute to the cultivation of the land and the development of its commerce.

*hath spoken unto thee*] Comp. Ex. 23.23; 34.11.

4. *thrust them out*] See on 6.19.

*whereas for the wickedness of these nations, etc.*] This entire clause is wanting in the Septuagint, and since it improperly anticipates v. 5, it has been declared a later gloss by some modern commentators. Medieval exegetes explain it as follows: Think not that you come into possession of the land for two reasons, namely on account of your righteousness and because of the wickedness of the nations; rather it is the wickedness of the nations which is primarily responsible for their expulsion (Rashi, RSbM).

5. *the wickedness of these nations*] The sins of the Amorites are execrated in Gen. 15.16, of the Canaanites in Lev. 18.24 ff., etc.; comp. also 18.12 and 20.18, where they are termed "abominations".

*that He may establish, etc.*] The same motive as in 8.18.

to Isaac, and to Jacob. Know therefore that it is not for 6  
thy righteousness that the LORD thy God giveth thee this  
good land to possess it; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Remember, forget thou not, how thou didst make the 7  
LORD thy God wroth in the wilderness; from the day that  
thou didst go forth out of the land of Egypt, until ye  
came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the  
LORD. Also in Horeb ye made the LORD wroth, and the 8  
LORD was angered with you to have destroyed you. When 9  
I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone,  
even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with  
you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights;  
I did neither eat bread nor drink water. And the LORD 10

6. *a stiffnecked people*] עַם קָשָׁה עֵרָךְ, a stern epithet used of Israel several times after the ignominious episode of the golden calf (Ex. 32.9; 33.3, 5; 34.9) and borrowed from the figure of the unyielding neck of an obstinate animal.

#### 7-29. THE EPISODE OF THE GOLDEN CALF AS EVIDENCE OF ISRAEL'S REBELLIOUS TEMPER.

7. *from the day, etc.*] For the several instances of rebellion comp. Ex. 15.24 (at Marah); 17.2 ff. (at Massah); Num. 11.4 ff. (at Kibroth-hattaavah); 14.2 ff. and 21.4f. (at Kadesh); 25.1 ff (at Shittim).

8. *in Horeb*] The episode of the golden calf (Exodus, chapters 32-34) is singled out as the most notable act of rebellion, overshadowing everything else.

*was angered*] Comp. 1.37.

9. *the tables of the covenant*] i. e. the tables on which were engraved the terms of the covenant, namely the ten commandments; see on 4.13.

*forty days and forty nights*] Comp. Ex. 24.18.

*neither eat . . . nor drink*] So Ex. 34.28. Mortification of the flesh was necessary to reach the highest stage of holiness, in which one may communicate with God.

delivered unto me the two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spoke with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

- 11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, 12 even the tables of the covenant. And the LORD said unto me: 'Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people that thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have dealt corruptly; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a 13 molten image.' Furthermore the LORD spoke unto me, saying: 'I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff- 14 necked people; let Me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.'

10. *written with the finger of God*] Hence eternal and indestructible, not like human writing which is perishable. So Ex. 31.18.

*the day of the assembly*] i. e. the day when the Hebrews assembled round mount Horeb to receive the Law. Similarly 10.4 and 18.16.

11. This verse partly repeats the beginning of the preceding verse.

12. *the way*] With particular reference to the second commandment against idolatry.

*a molten image*] מטכח, for which v. 16 below and Ex. 32.4, 8 have עֵל מטכח "a molten calf". According to a tradition in the Talmud (Ta'an. 28b), the day on which this national tragedy occurred was the 17th day of Tammuz, an unfortunate day in Jewish history, since it is also the date of the destruction of Jerusalem many years later.

13. *a stiffnecked people*] See above on v. 6.

14. *let Me alone, etc.*] In the same sense, though in somewhat different words, Ex. 32.10.

So I turned and came down from the mount, and the 15  
 mount burned with fire; and the two tables of the cov-  
 enant were in my two hands. And I looked, and, behold, 16  
 ye had sinned against the LORD your God; ye had made  
 you a molten calf; ye had turned aside quickly out of the  
 way which the LORD had commanded you. And I took hold 17  
 of the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and  
 broke them before your eyes. And I fell down before the 18  
 LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did  
 neither eat bread nor drink water; because of all your sin  
 which ye sinned, in doing that which was evil in the sight  
 of the LORD, to provoke Him. For I was in dread of the 19

15. *I turned and came down*] Comp. Ex. 32.15.

*and the mount burned with fire*] A circumstantial clause, as in 4.11  
 and 5.20: while the mount was burning with fire.

*in my two hands*] Apparently one table in each hand. Contrast  
 Ex. 32.15 "with the two tables of the testimony in his hand".

16-17. When Moses perceived the great sin committed by the  
 people in making the molten calf, he dashed the two stone tables to  
 pieces. This passage corresponds to Ex. 32.19.

18. *And I fell down, etc.*] According to the corresponding account  
 in Exodus, Moses ascended the mountain twice, first for the first  
 tables (24.18) and then for the second tables (34.28), spending each  
 time forty days and forty nights on the mountain. In the account of  
 Deuteronomy, 9.9 has reference to Moses' first sojourn and 10.10 to  
 his second sojourn on the mountain. As to the verse before us, which  
 cannot have reference to a third sojourn on the mountain, it is ex-  
 plained in various ways, either as a mere repetition of the first or an  
 anticipation of the second sojourn (so Ibn Ezra on 10.1), or else as  
 an extra middle period of forty days and forty nights of fasting and  
 humiliation in the tent in order to appease the wrath of God and avert  
 the people's destruction (Rashi, Luzzatto).

*as at the first*] i. e. as on the first occasion or sojourn on the moun-  
 tain.

19. *I was in dread*] יִרְחָי, a rare word, used here and in 28.60.



anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto  
 20 me that time also. Moreover the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him; and I prayed for Aaron  
 21 also the same time. And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and beat it in pieces, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of  
 22 the mount. — And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at  
 23 Kibroth-hattaavah, ye made the LORD wroth. And when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying: 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you'; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed Him not,  
 24 nor hearkened to His voice. Ye have been rebellious

*that time also*] Just as He hearkened to me on former occasions, comp. Ex. 15.25; 17.4 ff., etc.

20. *Moreover, etc.*] This fact of Moses' pleading for Aaron is wanting in the account of Exodus.

21. *your sin*] Properly the work of sin, so also Isa. 31.7 and Am. 8.14.

*burnt it with fire, etc.*] Similarly Ex. 32.20.

*that descended out of the mount*] Wanting in Ex. 32.20; on the other hand, our verse lacks the subsequent phrase of the verse in Exodus "and made the children of Israel drink of it".

22-23. Further instances of rebellion, introduced parenthetically.

22. *at Taberah*] Comp. Num. 11.1 ff.

*at Massah*] Comp. Ex. 17.2 ff.

*at Kibroth-hattaavah*] Comp. Num. 11.4 ff.

23. *Kadesh-barnea*] See on 1.22 ff.

24. *Ye have been rebellious*] A repetition of the indictment of v. 7.

against the LORD from the day that I knew you. — So I <sup>25</sup>  
 fell down before the LORD the forty days and forty nights  
 that I fell down; because the LORD had said He would  
 destroy you. And I prayed unto the LORD, and said: <sup>26</sup>  
 ‘O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inherit-  
 ance, that Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness,  
 that Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty  
 hand. Remember Thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and <sup>27</sup>  
 Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to  
 their wickedness, nor to their sin; lest the land whence <sup>28</sup>  
 Thou broughtest us out say: Because the LORD was not  
 able to bring them into the land which He promised unto  
 them, and because He hated them, He hath brought them  
 out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are Thy <sup>29</sup>  
 people and Thine inheritance, that Thou didst bring out  
 by Thy great power and by Thy outstretched arm.’

*that I knew you*] The Samaritan and the Septuagint read here  
 “that He knew you”, with reference to God.

25. *So I fell down, etc.*] Moses reverts to the incident of v 18  
 above, namely his intercession with God on behalf of Israel.

#### 26-29. MOSES' PRAYER (COMP. EX. 32.11-13).

26. *Thy people and Thine inheritance*] So below v. 29 and I Kings  
 8.51.

27. *Remember Thy servants, etc.*] As in Ex. 32.13.  
*stubbornness*] See above on v. 6.

28. *lest the land . . . say*] i. e. the inhabitants of the land (so the  
 ancient versions), hence the predicate is in the plural. Ex. 32.12, on  
 which this verse is based, has “Egyptians” instead of “land”.

*Because the Lord was not able*] So Num. 14.16.

*to slay them*] In the same sense Ex. 32.12.

- 10 At that time the LORD said unto me: 'Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me  
2 into the mount; and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were on the first tables which thou didst break, and thou shalt put them in  
3 the ark.' So I made an ark of acacia-wood, and hewed two

## CHAPTER 10.

### 1-5. MOSES HEWS OUT ANOTHER PAIR OF TABLES AND PREPARES AN ARK IN WHICH TO DEPOSIT THEM.

1. *At that time*] i. e. at the time of Moses' plea to God (9.26), forty days after the breaking of the first tables of the covenant (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

*the Lord said unto me, etc.*] Exactly as in Ex. 34.1.

*an ark of wood*] This order to prepare an ark is wanting in the corresponding passage of Ex. 34.1. On the other hand, the order for an ark, in which the tables of the covenant were to be deposited, is given by God in Ex. 25.10 ff., prior to the sin of the golden calf, which order is imparted to Bezalel (31.1 ff.; 35.30 ff.) and is executed by him (37.1 ff.). Some exegetes settle the difficulty by assuming the preparation of two arks, a temporary ark, prepared, as here, by Moses, in which the tables were deposited before the erection of the tent of the testimony, and a permanent ark, prepared by Bezalel, which stood in the tent of the testimony for all time (Rashi). Others consider our passage as a repetition in compact form of the order issued in Ex. 25.10 ff. and executed by Bezalel in 37.1 ff., assuming that Moses may have been described as making himself what was in fact made, under his direction, by Bezalel (Ibn Ezra, RmbN).

2. *the words*] i. e. the ten commandments.

3. *I made an ark*] According to Ex. 37.1 the ark was made later, after Moses had received the second tables. But one must keep in mind that the writer does not purport to tell the story as it actually happened, in strict chronological sequence, but rather to utilize past events for parenetic purposes (Hengstenberg).

*acacia-wood*] אֲשֵׁי שִׁטָּה (so also Ex. 25.10), literally "wood of torrent trees", *shittah* being the characteristic tree of the desert valleys of Sinai, Tih and the Dead Sea. This tree is about 20 feet high, and a

tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand. And He wrote <sup>4</sup> on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten words, which the LORD spoke unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them unto me. And I turned and came down from <sup>5</sup> the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the LORD commanded me. — And <sup>6</sup>

little broader than its height; it has thorny branches, bipinnate leaves, and its wood is exceedingly hard and of fine grain, hence preëminently suited for furniture (Tristram, *The Natural History of the Bible*<sup>o</sup>, pp. 390 ff.).

*in my hand*] As in Ex. 32.15; contrast "in my two hands" of 9.15 and 17

4. *the day of the assembly*] See on 9.10; comp. also 5.22.

5. *and there they are*] i. e. permanently and forever. Those exegetes who assume two arks, one temporary and one permanent (comp. above on v. 1), take this to mean "and there they were", i. e. until the erection of the tent of the testimony.

6-7. A fragment of Israel's itinerary in the desert, in the third person, interrupting Moses' discourse. The account states that the children of Israel journeyed from Beeroth-bene-jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died and his son Eleazar succeeded him in the priesthood, then from Moserah to Gudgod, and from Gudgod to Jotbah. It is difficult to see the motive for introducing this account here, especially since the death of Aaron did not take place until long after the sojourn at Horeb, comp. Num. 20.22 ff. Moreover, this account exhibits some discrepancies when compared with the similar account in Num. 33.31-33, according to which the order of stations was as follows: Moseroth (plural of Moserah), Bene-jaakan, Hor-haggidgad, Jotbah. Besides, Aaron is known to have died on mount Hor (Num. 20.22 ff.; 33.38), not at Moserah or Moseroth, which in the itinerary of Numbers appears to have been eight stations away from mount Hor. However, these difficulties are composed by the harmonists in the following ways. First, as to the motive of this notice, it is maintained by some commentators (Hengstenberg, Keil) that its aim is to

the children of Israel journeyed from Beeroth-bene-jaakan to Moserah; there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his

demonstrate that Aaron was forgiven after Moses' intercession for him (9.20), since the priestly office was continued to his descendants. With regard to the itinerary, it is claimed by these scholars that our passage corresponds not to Num. 33.31-33, but rather to Num. 33.37, which represents the final stage of Israel's peregrinations. In other words, the itinerary in Numbers chapter 33 up to v. 35 pictures Israel's journeyings to Sinai and Kadesh and then back from Kadesh southwards to Ezion-geber on the Red Sea; then v. 36 states briefly the new attempt to penetrate Canaan through Kadesh by retracing their steps from Ezion-geber to Kadesh; finally v. 37 shows that after their failure to penetrate Canaan through Kadesh they traveled again southwards to circumvent the land of Edom and enter Canaan through the land of Moab. Thus our passage, in the view of these scholars, refers to this last journey southwards. Naturally, in the itinerary of Numbers the stations are detailed only once, on the first journey northward, but they are to be implied in reverse order on the journey southward, which actually happens in the itinerary of Deuteronomy. Finally, as to the variation in the name of the place of Aaron's death, it is assumed by these harmonists that Moserah and mount Hor are identical, the former being the general name of the locality in which mount Hor was situated (comp. on the entire problem of the route of the exodus E. H. Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus*, Cambridge, 1871; H. Clay Trumbull, *Kadesh-Barnea*, London, 1884). None of the places mentioned in our passage have been identified with any degree of certainty. Beeroth-bene-jaakan signifies "wells of the children of Jaakan", and since Gen. 36.27 mentions Akan as the name of a Horite clan in Seir, for which I Chron. 1.42 has Jaakan, it is not unlikely that these wells were situated in or near the Arabah, in the vicinity of Edom. Gudgod is sometimes identified with the wady Ghudaghid which descends from the Tih plateau into the wady Jerafeh, opposite to Petra (Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, I, 181). Jotbah is described as "a land of brooks of water", hence it, too, must have been situated in one of the fertile valleys descending into the Arabah.

*Eleazar his son ministered, etc.*] Similarly Num. 20.25 ff., showing that Aaron's priesthood was hereditary.

stead. From thence they journeyed unto Gudgod; and 7  
 from Gudgod to Jotbah, a land of brooks of water. — At 8  
 that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear  
 the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the  
 LORD to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name,  
 unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath no portion nor in- 9  
 heritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance,

#### 8-9. SEPARATION OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI FOR SACRED SERVICE.

8. *At that time*] Reverts to the narrative of vv. 1-5, dealing with the occurrences at Horeb (Rashi).

*to bear the ark*] Similarly 31.25; Num. 3.31 and 4.15 (where the Kohathites, a Levite family, are assigned that duty), but elsewhere the bearing of the ark is ascribed to the priests, comp. Josh. 3.6 ff.; 6.6, 12; I Kings 8.3, 6, particularly the Levitical priests or priests of the tribe of Levi, see 31.9; Josh. 3.3; 8.33. It is evident that both the priests and Levites ministered to the ark, the latter assisting the former.

*the ark of the covenant of the Lord*] i. e. the ark containing the ten commandments which form the covenant between God and Israel. This elaborate expression, instead of simply "the ark of the Lord", is characteristic of Deuteronomy.

*to stand before the Lord*] i. e. to wait upon and serve Him.

*to minister unto Him*] This likewise is primarily a function of the priests, in which they are assisted by the Levites, comp. 17.12 and 18.7. To minister to the Lord is an expression used regularly of priests (21.5, etc.), while the Levites are said to minister to the priests (Num. 3.6; 18.2) or to the people (Num. 16.9).

*to bless in His name*] Likewise a function of the priests (21.5; Lev. 9.22; Num. 6.23), in which most likely they were assisted by the Levites.

9. *Levi hath no portion, etc.*] So 18.1 f., etc. The tribe of Levi, whose duty it was to minister to God, the priests and the people, had to be maintained by dues and offerings of the people.

- 10 according as the LORD thy God spoke unto him. — Now I stayed in the mount, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me that time  
 11 also; the LORD would not destroy thee. And the LORD said unto me: 'Arise, go before the people, causing them to set forward, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give unto them.'
- 12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God  
 13 with all thy heart and with all thy soul; to keep for thy good the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes,  
 14 which I command thee this day? Behold, unto the LORD

**10-11. FURTHER MENTION OF MOSES' INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL AND THE GRANTING OF HIS PETITION.**

**10.** *I stayed in the mount, etc.]* According to Ibn Ezra and others, this verse refers to the same event as 9.18, on which see comment.  
*that time also]* As on former occasions, comp., e. g., Ex. 16.4; 17.5.  
*the Lord would not destroy thee]* A parenthetical clause, repeating a resolve made by God before these forty days, in order to illustrate God's graciousness and benevolence.

**11.** *Arise, etc.]* Corresponds to Ex. 33.1.

**12-22. ANOTHER EXHORTATION TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD IN VIEW OF HIS GRACIOUSNESS TO ISRAEL.**

**12.** *what doth the Lord, etc.]* In return for His gracious dealings with Israel God requires nothing more than whole-hearted observance of His commandments. In a similar tone Mic. 6.8.

*to fear the Lord]* The most important requirement in religion is the fear of God; comp. 6.13.

*to walk in all His ways]* So 8.6.

*to love Him]* Comp. 6.5. Fear of God ultimately engenders love for Him.

**13.** *for thy good]* Appealing to the utilitarian motive, as in 5.30 and 6.24.

thy God belongeth the heaven, and the heaven of heavens,  
 the earth, with all that therein is. Only the LORD had a <sup>15</sup>  
 delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed  
 after them, even you, above all peoples, as it is this day.  
 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no <sup>16</sup>  
 more stiffnecked. For the LORD your God, He is God of <sup>17</sup>  
 gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty, and  
 the awful, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.

14. *the heaven of heavens*] שמי השמים is a superlative expression in Hebrew, meaning "the highest heavens" (GKC., § 133i), so also I Kings 8.27, etc.

15. *Only the Lord*] Following the order of words in the Hebrew text, the rendering should be "only in thy fathers the Lord had a delight" (see on 7.7).

*even you*] Among their offspring He chose you, not Ishmael and Esau (RMbN).

*as it is this day*] See on 2.30.

16. *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart*] An apt metaphor expressing the idea "keep your heart open and pervious to good influences"; similarly 30.6 and Jer. 4.4. This figure is used not only of the heart, but also of the ear (Jer. 6.10) and of the lips (Ex. 6.12 and 30).  
*stiffnecked*] See on 9.6.

17. *God of gods and Lord of lords*] Both are superlative expressions in Hebrew meaning "the greatest God and supreme Lord", comp. above on v. 14.

*the great God, the mighty, and the awful*] These three attributes of God were ordained by the men of the Great Synagogue to be used in the first benediction of every prayer (Ber. 33b).

*who regardeth not persons, etc.*] i. e. who is entirely impartial and not swayed by human considerations in meting out reward or punishment. The same expressions also in 16.19. The idiom נשא פנים signifies "lift up one's face or countenance", by granting one's requests (Gen. 19.21, etc.) or by showing an unjust partiality towards someone (as here and 28.50).

*reward*] תן is used particularly of a bribe to pervert justice, comp. 16.19; Ex. 23.8, etc.



18 He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow, and  
 19 loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love  
     ye therefore the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land  
 20 of Egypt. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; Him shalt  
     thou serve; and to Him shalt thou cleave, and by His  
 21 name shalt thou swear. He is thy glory, and He is thy  
     God, that hath done for thee these great and tremendous

18. *the fatherless and widow, etc.*] All the helpless people are protected by God from oppression.

*the stranger*] See on 1.16; comp. also comment on next verse.

*food and raiment*] The two absolutely necessary and indispensable requirements of life.

19. *Love ye therefore the stranger*] Just as God loves and protects the stranger or sojourner in your midst, so you should love and protect him, the motive being that you yourselves had been strangers formerly in the land of Egypt (Ex. 22.20; Lev. 19.24). On the exact meaning of גֵּר comp. comment on 1.16, to which should be added the following quotation from W. R. Smith's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 75 f.: "From a very early date the Semitic communities embraced, in addition to the free tribesmen of pure blood with their families and slaves, a class of men who were personally free but had no political rights, viz. the protected strangers, of whom mention is so often made both in the Old Testament and in early Arabic literature. The *ger* was a man of another tribe or district, who, coming to sojourn in a place where he was not strengthened by the presence of his own kin, put himself under the protection of a clan or of a powerful chief". Since a *ger* was liable to be the victim of injustice and oppression, the principle of protecting him was stressed time and again (1.16; 10.19; 24.14, 17; 27.19), often in connection with other helpless beings, such as the widow and the orphan (14.29; 16.11, 14; 24.19 ff.; 26.11 ff.). The *ger* is even privileged to serve the God of Israel and observe the Law together with the Israelites (31.12).

20. *Thou shalt fear, etc.*] So 6.13.

*cleave*] So 11.22; 13.5; 30.20; comp. on 4.4.

21. *He is thy glory*] So RMbN; others render "He is the object of thy praise" (Driver).

things, which thine eyes have seen. Thy fathers went down 22  
into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the  
LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for  
multitude.

Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep 11  
His charge, and His statutes, and His ordinances, and His  
commandments, alway. And know ye this day; for I 2  
speak not with your children that have not known, and  
that have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God,  
His greatness, His mighty hand, and His outstretched arm,  
and His signs, and His works, which He did in the midst 3  
of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all

22. *with threescore and ten persons*] The greatest claim of God  
upon your gratitude is the fact of your enormous increase in Egypt;  
similarly 26.5, and elsewhere.

*as the stars of heaven*] See on 1.10.

## CHAPTER 11.

### 1-9. AN APPEAL TO LOVE GOD AND OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS IN VIEW OF THE WONDERS HE WROUGHT FOR ISRAEL.

1. *thou shalt love the Lord*] As fear of God was emphasized in  
the preceding passage, stress is now laid on love of God.

*keep His charge*] i. e. God's injunctions generally, so Gen. 26.5; Josh.  
22.3; I Kings 2.3.

2. *for I speak not with your children that have not known, and that  
have not seen*] This clause is generally treated as parenthetical (Keil,  
Dillmann), and the accents are in favor of such a construction.

*I speak*] Supplied from the context, for it is wanting in the Hebrew.  
*chastisement*] מִסְכָּר might better be rendered here by "discipline",  
since the emphasis seems to be not on the punishment but on the  
moral effect produced by the punishment.

3. *His works*] Elsewhere "signs" are followed by "wonders".

4 his land; and what He did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how He made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD hath destroyed them unto this  
 5 day; and what He did unto you in the wilderness, until  
 6 ye came unto this place; and what He did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and every living sub-  
 7 stance that followed them, in the midst of all Israel; but your eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD which  
 8 He did. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandment which I command thee this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go over to

4. Allusion to the miracle of Israel's passage through the Red Sea (comp. Exodus, chapter 14).

*the Red Sea*] ים סוף, literally "sea of sedge or reeds", comp. on 1.1.

5. *this place*] i. e. the valley over against Beth-peor (3.29).

6. *Dathan and Abiram*] This episode of the revolt against the authority of Moses and Aaron is narrated in Numbers, chapter 16, where Korah is coupled with Dathan and Abiram. Why is Korah omitted here? Various explanations are offered in the Talmud (Sanh. 10a, comp. also Num. rabba 18.19). One view has it that Korah was not swallowed by the earth but was carried off by a pestilence; another view is to the effect that Korah's omission was a gracious gesture to the Levites, of whom Korah was a prominent representative: since Korah's sons did not die (Num. 26.11), Moses refrained from offending them by mentioning the revolt of their father.

*opened*] פצחה, as Num. 16.30 (but not 16.32), to express the idea of a sudden and violent rent in the earth, hence more precisely "tore apart" or "split open".

7. *your eyes have seen*] Comp. on 3.21.

8. Because of the great deeds enumerated above you should keep

possess it; and that ye may prolong your days upon the 9  
land, which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give unto  
them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey.

For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not 10  
as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where  
thou didst sow thy seed, and didst water it with thy foot,

God's commandments and trust in His leadership, for the sake of  
your own future welfare in the promised land.

9. *prolong your days, etc.*] Similarly 4.40.

*flowing with milk and honey*] So 6.3.

#### 10-12. DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVANTAGES OF CANAAN AND ITS SUPERIORITY OVER EGYPT.

10. The difference between Canaan and Egypt: the soil of the  
latter has to be watered by arduous human labor in order to produce  
the necessities of life, while the soil of the former obtains its fertility  
from the rain of heaven.

*didst water it with thy foot*] This is apparently an allusion to the  
method of cultivating the soil in Egypt, where rain is exceedingly rare  
and crops are dependent upon the annual inundation of the Nile  
and a system of artificial irrigation through dams and canals. The  
exact process of this method is doubtful and no longer ascertainable.  
Some think of the *shaduf* or machine by which a bucket of water is  
lifted from the river bed to the fields above; others mention the *sakieh*  
or water-wheel, usually turned by an ox, which raises the water by  
means of jars attached to a circular rope hanging over the wheel.  
But in none of these processes is the human foot employed, though it  
is admitted that it may have been used in ancient times (comp. Robin-  
son, *Biblical Researches*, II, 22 and 226). A more plausible identifica-  
tion is found in the process of distributing the stored up water of the  
Nile through the fields by many small channels in the soft mud, which  
was removed by the foot of the peasant to allow the water to pass  
and replaced to divert it (Manning, *The Land of the Pharaohs*, p. 31,  
quoted by Driver, *Deuteronomy*<sup>3</sup>, p. XXI). Another view is that  
"watering with the foot" is a metaphor denoting nothing more than  
"carrying water" (W. M. Müller in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, s. v. Egypt).

- 11 as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh  
 12 water as the rain of heaven cometh down; a land which the LORD thy God careth for; the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.
- 13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve Him with all  
 14 your heart and with all your soul, that I will give the

*as a garden of herbs*] The meaning is that the method of irrigation used in Egypt generally is applied in Palestine only to vegetable gardens; comp. on this point Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine*, p. 328.

11. *a land of hills and valleys*] In further contrast with Egypt, which is flat and monotonous, Palestine is said to possess hills and valleys, which affect the distribution of the rain and give rise to numerous springs and rivulets.

*as the rain of heaven cometh down*] More literally "according to (or in respect to) the rain of heaven" (on this use of the preformative comp. GKC., § 143e). Although Canaan is "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths" (8.7), yet these are not sufficient in times of drought, and rain of heaven is indispensable for good crops.

12. *careth for*] Literally "seeketh after" with sustained interest and constant care, comp. Isa. 62.12; Jer. 30.17.

*the eyes of the Lord, etc.*] God is constantly watching the land and is solicitous about its productivity.

*from the beginning of the year, etc.*] The reference here is to the agricultural year, which began in the autumn with plowing and sowing and closed in the summer with harvest and ingathering (Ex. 23.16; 34.22).

#### 13-21. ANOTHER PROMISE OF PROSPERITY FOR OBEYING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.

13. *to love, etc.*] So 10.12.

14. *I will give*] Speaking in the name of God, Moses sometimes identifies himself unconsciously with God; comp. 7.4, and elsewhere.

rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will give grass in thy fields for 15 thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be satisfied. Take heed 16 to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and the 17 anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, so that there shall be no rain, and the ground shall not yield her fruit; and ye perish quickly from off

*in its season*] Successful crops depend largely on the regularity of the autumnal and vernal rains.

*the former rain*] יורה is the autumnal rain, which begins in October-November, at first intermittently, then pouring down heavily, until the close of December, after which it continues at intervals through the winter.

*the latter rain*] מלקוש has reference to the heavy showers of March and April, which quicken the ripening crops. On these showers depend the growth of the vine and the olive and the ripening of the corn (George Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy land*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 63 f.).

*thy corn, etc.*] See on 7.13.

15. *and be satisfied*] A state which is conducive to apostasy, comp. 6.11; 8.12; 31.20.

16. *lest your heart be deceived, etc.*] The people might be led to attribute the continuous flow of prosperity to the numerous gods or Baalim, which were considered as the authors of fertility in Canaan and the neighboring countries. On Baalim as lords of water and givers of fertility, comp. W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 104 and 534.

17. *He shut up the heaven, etc.*] Comp. 28.23 f.; Lev. 26.19 f. Drought was considered the greatest calamity, for it cut off the fertility of the land upon which people subsisted.

*perish quickly, etc.*] Similarly 4.26.

- 18 the good land which the LORD giveth you. Therefore shall  
ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul;  
and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and  
19 they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall  
teach them your children, talking of them, when thou  
sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way,  
20 and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And  
thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house,  
21 and upon thy gates; that your days may be multiplied,  
and the days of your children, upon the land which the  
LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days  
of the heavens above the earth.
- 22 For if ye shall diligently keep all this commandment  
which I command you, to do it, to love the LORD your  
23 God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto Him, then  
will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you,  
and ye shall dispossess nations greater and mightier than

18-20. Repeated, with slight variations, from 6.6-9; comp. notes  
ibid.

21. *that your days may be multiplied, etc.*] Comp. 4.40; 6.2; 11.9.  
*as the days of the heavens*] i. e. as long as the heavens endure, hence  
forever and ever.

22-25. A PROMISE OF EXTENSIVE TERRITORY  
FOR KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.

22. *all this commandment*] So 5.28; 8.1, etc.

*to walk in all His ways*] So 8.6; 10.12.

*to cleave unto Him*] So 10.20, etc.

23. *drive out*] See on 7.17.

*dispossess*] So 9.1.

yourselves. Every place whereon the sole of your foot 24 shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall be your border. There shall no man 25 be able to stand against you: the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath spoken unto you.

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: 26 the blessing, if ye shall hearken unto the commandments 27 of the LORD your God, which I command you this day;

24. *whereon the sole of your foot shall tread*] So Josh. 1.3.

*from the wilderness, and Lebanon*] i. e. from the desert of Tih, which is the southern boundary of Palestine, and from the Lebanon mountains, which form the northern boundary of Palestine. Since it is evident that the delineation of the boundaries here is from south to north and from east to west, some commentators (Graetz, Dillmann, and others) suggest ועד הלבנון "even unto Lebanon" for והלבנון, corresponding to the wording in the following clause. However, no emendation is necessary, since the parallel passage in Josh. 1.4 exhibits the same construction as the passage before us.

*the river Euphrates*] Which flows through the Mesopotamian Valley. This was the ideal, not the actual, boundary in the east, comp. comment on 1.7.

*the hinder sea*] i. e. the Mediterranean Sea in the west, so 34.2, and elsewhere. This designation is due to Semitic orientation, according to which man faces east and has his back to the west.

25. *There shall no man, etc.*] So 7.24.

*as He hath spoken unto you*] Comp. Ex. 23.27.

26-32. Israel is offered an alternative: a blessing for keeping God's commandments and a curse for disobeying them (for greater details of the blessing and curse comp. chapters 27-28).

26. *Behold*] So 1.8, etc.

*I set before you*] Namely for your choice.

27. *if*] אשר in this sense is rare, comp. Lev. 4.22 and Josh. 4.21.



- 28 and the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.
- 29 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and
- 30 the curse upon mount Ebal. Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, over

28. *which ye have not known*] Of which you have had no experience and from which you have derived no benefit, comp. 13.3, 7, 14, etc.

29. *thou shalt set*] על נהן may mean "pronounce", comp. Lev. 16.21 (so Ibn Ezra), and does not have to be taken in the sense of "set up symbolically" (Driver, and others).

*the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal*] Gerizim is on the south side and Ebal on the north side of the fertile valley in which the central and prominent city of Shechem lay (comp. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*<sup>3</sup>, ch. VI, and pp. 335 ff.). The reason for this assignation is sometimes declared to be the fact that Gerizim is fertile and Ebal is bare. But, as a matter of fact, both mountains are now quite bare, whichever way you look at them (Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, III, 316). More likely is the suggestion that Gerizim lying south was to the right or lucky side of the eastward-facing Hebrews, while Ebal lying north was to their left or unlucky side (RMBN, Schultz, Keil, Dillmann).

30. *beyond the Jordan*] i.e. west of the Jordan, from the standpoint of the speaker, so 3.20 and 25.

*behind the way of the going down of the sun*] i.e. behind the great road traversing western Palestine from north to south and passing through the plain east of Shechem (Dillmann, Driver).

*that dwell in the Arabah*] It is difficult to see why the Canaanites

against Gilgal, beside the terebinths of Moreh? For ye are 31  
 to pass over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which  
 the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it,  
 and dwell therein. And ye shall observe to do all the 32  
 statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

should be associated with the Arabah and no other part of Palestine. The only plausible explanation offered is the fact that the Arabah was most familiar to the Israelites, who were stationed in front of it. Another view, less likely, is that Arabah here stands for the broad plain of Shechem.

*over against Gilgal*] גלגל denotes a primitive circle of stones, known in scientific parlance as a cromlech. There were several places of this name in Palestine, the most famous being near Jericho, with which some Rabbis and Church Fathers had identified the site in our passage; but this place is some 28 miles south-west of Shechem. Another Gilgal lay above Bethel ( II Kings 2.1 ff.) and has been identified with the present Jiljilyeh seven miles north of Bethel, but this, too, is at too great a distance from Shechem to be taken into consideration. Still another Gilgal was supposed by Dillmann to have existed near Shechem, and the name of such a place (Juleijil, Arabic diminutive of Gilgal) has actually been discovered on the plain of Shechem, one mile east of the foot of Gerizim and two and a half miles south-east of Shechem. This Gilgal suits the data of our passage and has been accepted as the best solution by a number of scholars (Schlatter, Buhl, G. A. Smith, and others).

*the terebinths of Moreh*] Mentioned also in Gen. 12.6 (in the singular) as being near Shechem and visited by Abraham. The terebinth is supposed to have been a sacred tree employed for soothsaying and divination, comp. W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 193 f.

31-32. Final appeal to the people: You are about to occupy the promised land, hence see that you observe the statutes and ordinances given to you by God.

## CHAPTERS 12-26.

## EXPOSITION OF SPECIAL LAWS.

The exposition of the Decalogue (Chapters 5-11), the basic law of the Hebrew theocracy, is now followed by an exposition of the special laws, the so-called statutes and ordinances, by which the daily life of the Hebrews was to be regulated in the promised land. These statutes and ordinances are of a triple character, ceremonial, civil, and criminal, and, as customary in Deuteronomy, they are stated in a parenthetic tone and hortatory style, not in dry legal terminology.

For a detailed outline of these special laws see Introduction.

## CHAPTER 12.

## THE LAW OF A CENTRAL SANCTUARY.

This is one of the most important and also one of the most debated chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy. Its point of gravity lies in the fact that it introduces, apparently for the first time, the principle of centralized worship in Palestine and stresses it repeatedly as if to leave no doubt about this requirement. Yet Ex. 20.21 f., ordaining an altar of earth or of unhewn stone, states distinctly that "in every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee". This statement evidently implies the right to worship anywhere and seems to be in conflict with the principle of centralized worship in Deuteronomy. However, the contradiction is only apparent, not real. It is claimed by critics of the Pentateuch that the central place of worship, which is stressed in Deuteronomy, has reference to Jerusalem, where the temple and central sanctuary were situated. But, as a matter of fact, this is not quite evident: Jerusalem is never as much as hinted at in the several references to a central sanctuary, nor is Jerusalem the only place that served as a central sanctuary in later years, for Shiloh preceded it in that capacity. The only logical conclusion that may be drawn from the Deuteronomic injunction is that the worship of God could not be carried on on high places and under trees, wherever one chose, like the worship of the other gods (the Baalim), but had to be performed at definite and fixed places designated or approved by God Himself. In other words, the Deuteronomic injunction does not differ much from the statement in Ex. 20.21, mentioned above. The only condition for a place of worship is that it be chosen or approved by God without regard to locality. That this is the right construction may be seen from the fact that in 27.5 ff.

These are the statutes and the ordinances, which ye shall **12** observe to do in the land which the LORD, the God of thy fathers, hath given thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. Ye shall surely destroy all the places, <sup>2</sup> wherein the nations that ye are to dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and

the Israelites are ordered to erect an altar on mount Ebal and offer sacrifices thereon soon after crossing the Jordan. Hence, unbiased scholars are beginning to abandon the position held by Pentateuchal critics and are veering around to the view expressed above, as may be seen from Dr. Welch's *Code of Deuteronomy* (London, 1924).

1. *These are the statutes and the ordinances, etc.*] This is the immediate superscription to the special laws (chapters 12-26), giving their exact title. חקים "statutes" are for the most part religious and ceremonial decrees, while משפטים "ordinances" are civil and criminal laws. Comp. 4.1; 5.1; 6.1, etc.

*all the days, etc.*] So 4.10 and 31.13.

2-3. All the sacred places of the Canaanites and their sanctuaries for Baal worship are to be destroyed.

2. *Ye shall surely destroy*] אבד חמדין, the finite of the Pi'el conjugation fortified by its absolute infinitive, expresses the idea of utter destruction (GKC., § 113 1-r).

*places*] Hebr. מקום, like Arabic *makam*, probably designated "a sacred place", where the heathen worshiped their idols, comp. II Chron. 33.19. It was quite natural that the sacred place should be identified with the deity, and to this circumstance no doubt may be ascribed the usage of מקום for God in talmudic and midrashic literature.

*that ye are to dispossess*] A parenthetic clause.

*upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every leafy tree*] These were favorite places for idolatrous observances and licentious rites in Canaan, hence they are frequently denounced by the prophets, comp. I Kings 14.23; II Kings 17.10; Hos. 4.13; Jer. 2.20; Ezek. 6.13, etc. On the motive of worshiping on mountains and under trees, comp. W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 172, 185, 489 f.. One of these high places unearthed during the excavation of Gezer is described by S. A. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology*, pp. 80 ff.; on the tree cult, see *ibid.*, p. 122.

- 3 under every leafy tree. And ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods; and ye shall destroy their name out  
 4 of that place. Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.  
 5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come;

*leafy*] The precise connotation of רענן, which is always descriptive of a tree (except Ps. 92.11), is not known, because its etymology is not certain, but the majority of scholars, following the context and ancient tradition, tend to render it "luxuriant, spreading, fresh".

3. *break down their altars, etc.*] An elaboration of v. 2, which is similar to 7.5; comp. comment on the latter.

4. *Ye shall not do so, etc.*] i. e. you shall not worship the Lord your God wherever you please, especially on high places and under trees, but at a definite and central place designated by Him (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

5. *But unto the place... even unto His habitation shall ye seek*] A case of anacoluthon (GKC., § 167b), borne out by the Hebrew accents. Some commentators (Driver, for instance) take "the place" to refer to Jerusalem, but this inference is hardly justified, comp. the introductory remark to this chapter.

*to put His name there*] Similarly v. 21, but v. 11 has "to cause His name to dwell there". The name of God is the nature of God, His character and attributes as manifested to men. The sanctuary was regarded as the habitation of God or of God's name, which is the same. Comp. II Sam. 7.13 (and elsewhere) "build a house for My name", and Isa. 18.7, where the Temple is called "the place of the name of the Lord of hosts".

*habitation*] Implying a noun שֶׁבֶן, which does not occur elsewhere. Some commentators (Keil, Oettli, and others), disregarding the pausal accent under the preceding word, construe it as an infinitive "that He may dwell there".

*shall ye seek*] Similarly Am. 5.5. דרש denotes "to seek assiduously", comp. 4.29 and 11.12.

*thither thou shalt come*] Probably on the three principal festivals,

and thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your 6  
sacrifices, and your tithes, and the offering of your hand,  
and your vows, and your freewill-offerings, and the first-  
lings of your herd and of your flock; and there ye shall eat 7

on Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, comp. Ex. 23.17; 34.23 f. Note the change from the plural to the singular, which is quite frequent in the Pentateuch and has no special significance.

6. Seven kinds of offerings are to be brought by the worshipers to the central place of worship on their festival pilgrimages.

*your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices*] עולה and זבח are two very ancient and common kinds of sacrifice, used together frequently in the Bible to designate sacrifice in general (comp., for example, Ex. 10.25; 18.12; Josh. 22.26; II Kings 5.17; Jer. 7.22). עולה, the etymology of which is disputed, was a sacrifice (animal or fowl) which was entirely consumed on the altar, a holocaust; זבח, on the other hand, was a sacrifice of which only the blood and fat were offered to God, while the flesh was eaten at a feast by the worshiper and his family. The latter often is identical with thank-offering, comp. Lev. 7.12, or with peace-offering, comp. Ex. 24.5.

*tithes*] מעשר is a tenth of one's income consecrated to God. Generally speaking, tithes were offered of fruits of the soil and of cattle, and those who chiefly benefited by them were the Levites performing sacred service at the sanctuary. See further on 14.22.

*the offering of your hand*] Literally "that which is lifted by your hand" off some product, hence a contribution for sacred purposes. The nature of this contribution is not defined, but it probably refers to the first-fruits (26.2; Ex. 23.19) and other free-will gifts presented at the three festival pilgrimages (16.10 f.; 14.16 f.).

*vows*] i. e. extraordinary sacrifices offered in consequence of a vow. These may be either burnt-offerings or thank-offerings.

*freewill-offerings*] נדבה is a spontaneous offering, without any obligation.

*firstlings*] Comp. 15.19 ff.

7. *ye shall eat*] Namely of the thank-offerings, which were accompanied by a sacrificial meal.

before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, 8 wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. Ye shall not do after all that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your 9 God giveth thee. But when ye go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God causeth you to inherit, and He giveth you rest from all your enemies 10 round about, so that ye dwell in safety; then it shall come to pass that the place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there, thither shall

*before the Lord*] i. e. in the vicinity of the sanctuary.

*ye shall rejoice*] The offerings are to be made with a joyous heart.

*in all that ye put your hand unto*] i. e. in all your undertakings. מְשַׁלַּח יד denotes "anything one lays his hand on", and is probably synonymous with יד מְעַשֶׂה in 2.7.

*your households*] i. e. your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, as enumerated below in v. 12 and v. 18.

8. *this day*] i. e. at the time of Israel's sojourn in the field of Moab.

*every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes*] An allusion to the arbitrary and ubiquitous worship in the wilderness, which was natural under the circumstance of continuous wandering. The same expression also in Judg. 17.6; 21.25.

9. The reason for the irregular worship is the unsettled and nomad state of Israel.

*rest*] Properly place of rest, comp. I Kings 8.56.

10. *rest from all your enemies*] This condition did not obtain fully until the days of David (comp. II Sam. 7.1), though relative quiet came after the conquest of Canaan under Joshua (21.44), whence the name of the place of the sanctuary was Shiloh meaning "rest" (according to Mishna Zeb. 14.6, and Sifre ad loc.).

ye bring all that I command you: your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD. And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and <sup>12</sup> your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates, forasmuch as he hath no portion nor inheritance with you. Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt- <sup>13</sup> offerings in every place that thou seest; but in the place <sup>14</sup> which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

11. A repetition in more compact form of verses 5-6 above.

*your choice vows*] Since this cannot imply that some vows are to be fulfilled and some not, it must be explained as meaning that the offerings in fulfillment of vows should be of the best and choicest (Sifre).

12. *rejoice*] See above on v. 7.

*the Levite*] Since the Levites did not possess any territory (comp. 10.9), they were dependent for their subsistence upon the bounties of others.

*that is within your gates*] i.e. resident in your cities. This is a characteristic expression in Deuteronomy, where it occurs some 25 times. Some critics find this statement about Levites living in the cities of the Israelites inconsistent with Num. 35.1 ff. (comp. also Lev. 25.32 f. and Josh. 21.3), according to which the Levites were given 48 cities for their exclusive residence. However, as pointed out by Keil, these cities were not inhabited by Levites only, but contained also Israelites in their midst, a construction to which the text in Numbers may lend itself. A more plausible explanation is that the Levites traveled extensively around the land, and in their capacity as instructors of the people they had to sojourn in the various cities (comp. Judg. 17.7 ff.; II Chron. 17.7 ff.).

13-14. Another repetition of the injunction against arbitrary places of worship, this time with reference only to burnt-offerings.



## 15 Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh within

15-16. These verses contain a provision that animals intended for food, not for sacrifice, may be slaughtered and eaten at any place, provided only that their blood is not eaten with the flesh. This seems to be in contradiction with Lev. 17.1 ff., according to which every ox, lamb, or goat slaughtered by the Israelites must be presented at the sanctuary. Rabbi Ishmael (Hul. 16b f., comp. also Sifre ad loc.) harmonizes these two passages very cleverly by declaring that the passage in Leviticus has reference to the period of the wilderness, when the Israelites were one compact group and the consumption of flesh was conditioned by the slaughtering of the animal at the sanctuary, while the passage in Deuteronomy refers to a settled state in Palestine, where the Israelites were scattered over a large area and the restriction of flesh consumption to a central sanctuary was no longer practicable. The modern critical school, adherents of the Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen theories, who consider Deuteronomy a product of the late seventh century and its religious tenets later evolutions of earlier primitive beliefs, characteristically construe the Deuteronomic provision for free and ubiquitous slaughtering of animals for consumption as a necessary corollary of the limitation of all offerings and sacrifices to a single sanctuary. Originally, these scholars believe, every slaughtering of an animal, whether for personal or divine use, was a sacrificial act, requiring the fat and the blood to be offered at an altar, which was facilitated by the existence of many altars. They compare in this connection I Sam. 14.32 ff., where the sin of the people in eating flesh with the blood is corrected by the erection of an altar on which the blood could be properly presented to God. As to Lev. 17.1 ff., which constitutes part of the so-called Law of Holiness and is presumed to be of the same age as Ex. 20.24, they contend that in its original form this passage, too, had reference to a plurality of altars, which the law of Deuteronomy aimed to obliterate. However, this argument, plausible in itself, hinges entirely on the assumption of a single sanctuary for all Israel in Deuteronomy, which has never been established beyond doubt and is being forcefully contested by present-day scholars (comp. Introduction, pp. xx f.).

15. *Notwithstanding*] i. e. in spite of the above injunction.

*thou mayest kill*] The term *זבח*, which is used especially of sacrificial slaughtering, is here employed of slaughtering in general, for a family meal.

all thy gates, after all the desire of thy soul, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which He hath given thee; the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the gazelle, and as of the hart. Only ye shall not eat the blood; 16 thou shalt pour it out upon the earth as water. Thou 17 mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thine oil, or the firstlings of thy herd or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill-offerings, nor the offering of thy hand; but 18 thou shalt eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son,

*after all the desire of thy soul]* So below vv. 20 f. and 18.6. The soul is treated as the seat of feeling and emotion.

*according to the blessing, etc.]* i. e. according to your material means, so 16.17.

*the unclean and the clean may eat thereof]* Only the clean may eat of a sacrificial animal (Lev. 7.19), but this flesh, not being sacrificial, may be eaten also by the unclean. Similarly below v. 22 and 15.22.

*gazelle . . . hart]* These animals are fit to be eaten (14.5), but not fit for sacrifice, hence they may be eaten by the unclean.

16. *ye shall not eat the blood]* The blood was strictly and repeatedly prohibited in the Bible, the reason being indicated below in v. 23 "for the blood is the life".

*thou shalt pour it out on the earth]* Since there is no altar on which to offer it.

17. A repetition of the injunction of vv. 6 f., in order to preclude any possible misapplication of the permission granted in v. 15. Thus while flesh not intended for sacrifice may be eaten in any place, the tithes of corn, wine, and oil, the firstlings of the herd, and vows and freewill-offerings must be eaten at the central sanctuary. On the manner of eating the tithe, comp. 14.22 ff.; on that of the firstlings, comp. 15.20; as to the consumption of meals in connection with vows and freewill-offerings, see Lev. 7.16 f.

18. *but thou shalt eat them, etc.]* Comp. above on vv. 5, 7, 12.

- and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates; and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou  
 19 putttest thy hand unto. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon thy land.  
 20 When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as He hath promised thee, and thou shalt say: 'I will eat flesh', because thy soul desireth to eat flesh; thou mayest  
 21 eat flesh, after all the desire of thy soul. If the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to put His name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat within thy gates, after all

19. *the Levite*] Special emphasis is laid on the Levites (in addition to vv. 12 and 18) as deserving material assistance from everybody, since they are left without inheritance and are supposed to devote all their services to God and to the instruction of the people.

20-28. Repetition, with greater detail, of vv. 15 ff.

20. *shall enlarge thy border*] Which eventuality would augment considerably the distance of many parts of the country from the central sanctuary.

*as He hath promised thee*] Comp. Ex. 34.24.

*I will eat flesh*] Namely at a family feast or on some other exceptional occasion. Animal food was not a common article of diet among Semites, whose everyday food consisted largely of the spontaneous produce of the bounteous earth. Flesh of domestic animals was eaten only as a luxury or in times of famine (W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 222 f.). This is borne out by Nathan's parable in I Sam. 12.1 ff.

*thy soul desireth*] The soul is regarded as the seat of the appetite, similarly 14.26, and elsewhere.

21. *as I have commanded thee*] Above v. 15.

*gates*] i. e. cities, as often in the Bible.

the desire of thy soul. Howbeit as the gazelle and as the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat thereof; the unclean and the clean may eat thereof alike. Only be stedfast in not eating the blood; for the blood is the life; and thou shalt not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it out upon the earth as water. Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD. Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which

22. Verbal expansion of the latter half of v. 15.

*as the gazelle and as the hart is eaten*] יֹאכֵל אֹתָם הַצִּבִּי is a peculiar phrase in Hebrew: a passive construction used impersonally with the object of the active construction still subordinated in the accusative (GKC., § 121a-b). But perhaps אֹת here is not an accusative, but a demonstrative, comp. Eitan in *Am. Jour. of Sem. Lang.*, XLIV (1928), 50f.

23. *Only be stedfast, etc.*] A repetition of v. 16, adding the motive for not eating the blood of the animal.

*the blood is the life*] Similarly Gen. 9.4; Lev. 17.11, and elsewhere. This humanitarian principle is found also among other nations, comp. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, I, 178 f.

24. Repetition of v. 16.

25. *Thou shalt not eat it*] Repeated a third time for emphasis and to inculcate the reward for observing this commandment. It is interesting to note that while the blood of the animal is strictly and repeatedly prohibited, the fat, which shares the sanctity of the blood in all sacrifices, is not mentioned here at all. The natural corollary is that the fat of animals slaughtered for domestic use was never prohibited (comp. Ibn Ezra on Lev. 7.20).

26. *Only thy holy things, etc.*] קִדְשִׁים is a general designation for sacred gifts that are mostly obligatory, whether sacrifices, tithes, or any other recognized due. The restrictive particle implies that ordinary animals not intended for sacrifice may be slaughtered anywhere and everywhere.

*thy vows*] See above on v. 6.

- 27 the LORD shall choose; and thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God; and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out against the altar of the LORD thy God, and
- 28 thou shalt eat the flesh. Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.
- 29 When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest in to dispossess them, and
- 30 thou dispossessest them, and dwellest in their land; take heed to thyself that thou be not ensnared to follow them,

27. This verse states briefly the difference between a burnt-offering (עֹלָה) and any other sacrifice (זֶבַח); of the former the flesh and the blood are placed on the altar, the flesh being burned and the blood poured out against the altar, while of the latter the flesh is eaten by the worshiper and his family and only the blood is poured out against the altar.

*and thou shalt offer*] עָשָׂה, literally "do, prepare", is used in the sense of "offer" in connection with sacrifices, comp., for instance, Ex. 29.38 f.; Lev. 9.7, 22.

*poured out*] שָׁפַךְ instead of the more technical term יָרַק "to toss or throw" (in a volume), as in Lev. 3.2, 8, 13.

28. *Observe and hear, etc.*] So 6.3; 7.12. Luzzatto renders more sensibly "take care to obey".

#### 29-31. INJUNCTION AGAINST IMITATING THE IDOLATROUS RITES OF THE NATIVE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN.

29. *cut off*] So 19.1, comp. also Josh. 23.4.

30. *ensnared to follow them*] חָקַט here is construed in the same sense as חָקַט in 7.25 (so Kimhi, Luzzatto), as if the roots נָקַט and חָקַט meant one and the same thing.

after that they are destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying: 'How used these nations to serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.' Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God; for every 31 abomination to the LORD, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods.

All this word which I command you, that shall ye ob- 13  
serve to do; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer 2

*How used these nations, etc.]* This is an allusion to the powerful impulse of imitation and perhaps also to the ancient custom of appeasing the gods indigenous to a country (comp. I Sam. 26.19; II Kings 17.25 ff.).

31. *Thou shalt not do so, etc.]* i. e. do not associate these strange, idolatrous rites with your God, for He hates all these abominations (7.25; 23.19), a striking example of which is burning sons and daughters in the fire to please the gods (comp. Jer. 7.31; 19.5). On human sacrifices among the Semites, see W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 361 ff. and 630 f. Recent excavations at Gezer, Taanak, Megiddo, and Jericho have unearthed many jars containing skeletons of infants offered as sacrifices to appease the gods, in the vicinity of altars on high places (comp. J. Garrow Duncan, *Digging Up Biblical History*, II, 169 ff.).

## CHAPTER 13.

### LAWS AGAINST IDOLATRY.

1. A repetition, in a somewhat different form, of the idea expressed in 4.2, namely that nothing is to be added or subtracted from the commandments of God.

#### 2-6. AGAINST A PROPHET WHO SEDUCES PEOPLE TO IDOLATRY.

2. *a prophet]* נביא, the etymology of which is doubtful, is probably a noun of passive formation, meaning originally "one stirred, excited, or inspired" by the spirit of God (so Torczyner in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* for 1931, p. 322).

- 3 of dreams — and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee — saying: 'Let us go after other gods, which thou  
4 hast not known, and let us serve them'; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that

More commonly it is taken as an active participle signifying, by analogy with a similar term in Assyrian, "one who speaks or announces". The *nabi* or prophet was a person qualified by God to be His spokesman to men. In earlier times the *nabi* was styled נִחֵז or נִחֵז, both denoting "seer" or "visionary", probably by reason of his inherent quality of prophetic vision and his ability to predict future events (comp. Num. 12.6, according to which God's revelation comes to the prophet through a vision).

*a dreamer of dreams*] An inferior grade of prophet who obtains God's revelation in a dream (so Maimonides in his *Guide to the Perplexed*, II, ch. 44.).

*he give thee*] viz. in proof of the truth of his prophecy.

*a sign or a wonder*] According to Sifre (so also Rashi) אֵימֹת refers to a sign in heaven, while מִוֹת (generally derived from a root מָתַח found in Arabic) has reference to a sign on earth. RMbN construes the former as a portent of a future natural event, while he takes the latter as a sign of something supernatural, such as the conversion of a staff into a serpent. Others take both words to refer to one and the same thing.

3. *come to pass*] This statement about the actual occurrence of the prediction of the idolatrous prophet caused some speculation among the Rabbis as to the exact status of the prophet. According to Rabbi Akiba (Sanh. 90a, comp. also Sifre ad loc.), the reference here is to a true prophet who later became recalcitrant, since a false prophet could not perform a miracle. Ibn Ezra quotes an opinion that this so-called prophet purloined the sign and wonder from a true prophet. RMbN construes *nabi* here as a false prophet who nevertheless has the gift of soothsaying.

*and let us serve them*] וְנַעֲבָדָם is an unusual form in Hebrew, see on 5.9.

dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God putteth you to proof, to know whether ye do love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. After the LORD your God shall ye walk, and Him shall ye fear, and His commandments shall ye keep, and unto His voice shall ye hearken, and Him shall ye serve, and unto Him shall ye cleave. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken perversion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage, to draw thee aside out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to

4. *putteth you to proof*] The fact that God allows the prediction of the false prophet to come to pass is only for the purpose of testing you whether you love God to such an extent that even supernatural forces will not swerve you from Him.

*whether ye do love*] The combination of *וְ* with the participle instead of a pronoun with the participle is for the purpose of emphasizing the existence of the love of God among the Israelites, which is further stressed by the phrase "with all your heart and all your soul" (so 6.5, and elsewhere).

5. *After the Lord, etc.*] An accumulation of hortative phrases aiming to emphasize the fundamental duty of obeying the God of Israel. Similarly 10.20.

6. *shall be put to death*] The manner of death is not prescribed: some Rabbis think it is by the sword (Targum, Sanh. 52b), some believe by stoning (through analogy with v. 11), and others assume asphyxiation (Sifre ad loc., Sanh. 89b).

*perversion*] Literally "defection, apostasy" from God, similarly Jer. 28.16; 29.32, etc.

*to draw thee aside*] The Hebr. word *הדיח* is used especially for drawing people away from God to idolatry, so also vv. 11 and 14.



walk in. So shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

- 7 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly saying: 'Let us go and serve other gods', which thou hast not known, 8 thou, nor thy fathers; of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of 9 the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt

*So shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee]* A phrase found frequently in Deuteronomy (17.7, 12; 19.19; 21.21; 22.21, 22, 24; 24.7) at the close of laws providing capital punishment.

#### 7-12. AGAINST RELATIVES AND FRIENDS WHO ENTICE ONE TO IDOLATRY.

7. *thy brother]* i. e. on the father's side (Sifre, Rashi).  
*the son of thy mother]* i. e. thy brother on the mother's side.  
*the wife of thy bosom]* An affectionate term used also in 28.54, similarly Mic. 7.5, "her that lieth in thy bosom".  
*thy friend, that is as thine own soul]* i. e. thy dearest and most intimate friend, comp. I Sam. 18.1 and 3. Sifre and Rashi curiously take it to refer to the father.  
*entice thee]* Mostly in a bad sense.  
*Let us go, etc.]* So v. 3.  
 8. *of the gods of the people, etc.]* So 6.14.  
*from the one end of the earth, etc.]* Comp. 28.64.  
 9. *consent]* in theory (Ibn Ezra).  
*neither shall thine eye pity him]* viz. when he is to be killed (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt 10  
surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to put  
him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.  
And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because 11  
he hath sought to draw thee away from the LORD thy  
God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of  
the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, 12  
and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is in  
the midst of thee.

If thou shalt hear tell concerning one of thy cities, which 13  
the LORD thy God giveth thee to dwell there, saying:  
'Certain base fellows are gone out from the midst of thee, 14

*neither shalt thou conceal him]* By refraining from citing him  
to court (Ibn Ezra, RMbN).

10. *thou shalt surely kill him]* The Septuagint, which, like the  
Rabbis, felt the incongruity of killing the offender without a trial in  
court, rendered the phrase "thou shalt surely denounce him", namely  
in court.

*thy hand, etc.]* As that of the first witness, comp. 17.7.

11. *thou shalt stone him]* Here the manner of the offender's death  
is specified.

*to draw thee away from the Lord]* Idolatry was considered the most  
heinous offense in the Hebrew theocracy, hence the severest punishment.

12. *all Israel shall hear and fear]* So 17.13; 19.20; 21.21. The  
severity of the punishment was expected to have a deterrent effect  
upon others.

### 13-19. AGAINST A CITY SEDUCED INTO IDOLATRY.

13. *If thou shalt hear tell, etc.]* This is a free rendering to obviate  
an inversion in the Hebrew text: לאמר being placed at the end of the  
verse instead of following חשע, it is implied also at the latter place.

14. *Certain base fellows]* Literally "men, base fellows", a rather  
pleonastic phrase, though required by Hebrew idiom, comp. Gen. 13.8;  
Num. 13.3; Judg. 18.2; 19.22; I Kings 21.10; II Kings 2.16. בלי עול  
is explained in rabbinic sources as בלי עול "without a yoke", hence "un-  
bridled, unrestrained" (Sifre ad loc.), but the word has been explained

- and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying:  
 Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known';  
 15 then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask dili-  
 gently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain,  
 that such abomination is wrought in the midst of thee;  
 16 thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with  
 the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is  
 therein and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.  
 17 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of

more correctly as being a contraction of בלי יועיל "of no worth or value", as the English idiom "good-for-nothing" (Gesenius, etc.). It is quite evident that the word is not a proper name, though "sons of Belial" has become a stereotyped phrase in English.

*have drawn away*] See above on v. 11.

*Let us go, etc.*] So vv. 3 and 7.

15. *inquire, and make search, and ask diligently*] i. e. institute a thorough and rigid investigation into the matter. From this verse, as well as from 17.4 and 19.18, the Rabbis (Sanh. 40a f.) deduce the principle that in criminal cases seven questions should be directed to the witnesses concerning the place and time of the crime, and if they fail to answer these questions, their testimony is invalid.

*if it be truth, etc.*] Exactly as in 17.4.

*abomination*] תועבה is used especially of idolatrous worship, comp. on 7.25.

16. *with the edge of the sword*] Literally "according to the mouth of the sword", פֶּה "mouth" being used for "edge" in the same way as לֵב "heart" is employed for "middle."

*destroying it utterly*] Literally, "devoting it to the *herem* or ban", see on 7.2. The reference here is to the most rigorous ban, by which everything found in the city, both living beings and property, was destroyed (W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 150 and 453 f.).

*and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword*] This phrase, which seems to be redundant, is wanting in the Septuagint.

the broad place thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, unto the LORD thy God; and it shall be a heap for ever; it shall not be built again. And there shall cleave nought of the devoted <sup>18</sup> thing to thy hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger, and show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as He hath sworn unto thy fathers; when thou shalt hearken to the <sup>19</sup> voice of the LORD thy God, to keep all His commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.

17. *broad place*] The term *חור* denotes a broad open place in the center of a city or village, where public meetings were held and all important business transacted.

*every whit*] i. e. wholly, completely. The term *כליל* is rare, occurring elsewhere (as, e. g., I Sam. 7.9) in connection with "burnt-offering" or "holocaust", which was wholly consumed by fire.

*a heap*] *לח*, Arabic *tell*, is a desolate mound or heap of ruins of an ancient city, over which sometimes a new city had been superimposed. Asia Minor is covered with numerous such mounds or *tells*, some of which have yielded invaluable information to archaeologists in recent years.

18. *And there shall cleave nought, etc.*] Nothing is to be appropriated of the devoted things, lest God display the fierceness of His anger and deal out dire punishment to the offender, as exemplified in the case of Achan the son of Carmi, who appropriated some of the devoted things of Jericho (Josh. 7.1).

*that the Lord may turn, etc.*] i. e. that God's anger with the idolatrous city may recede and be turned into mercy for the remaining few, who will then be multiplied.

19. *when thou shalt hearken, etc.*] i. e. on condition that you become obedient to God and observe all His commandments.

*that which is right*] Similarly 6.18, etc.

- 14 Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes  
 2 for the dead. For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be His own

### CHAPTER 14.

#### 1-21. LAWS OF HOLINESS FOR THE PEOPLE.

#### 1-2. AGAINST DISFIGUREMENT IN MOURNING.

The custom of lacerating the body as a mourning rite was common among many ancient nations and is still current among savage or semi-civilized races. W. R. Smith (*Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, pp. 322 ff.) describes this gruesome practice among the Semites. Among the Arabs, for instance, the women in mourning used to scratch their faces till the blood flowed and to shave their hair (Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, p. 160). This rite is prohibited first in Lev. 19.28 to the people and *ibid.* 21.5 to the priests, the reason being that as a heathenish practice it must not be imitated by the Hebrews.

1. *Ye are the children of the Lord*] This expresses the motive for the following injunction: The relationship between God and Israel being as close and intimate as between father and son (comp. Ex. 4.22 f.), the Israelites should refrain from practicing the idolatrous rites of the heathen.

*ye shall not cut yourselves*] Instead of התגדר the similar injunction in Lev. 19.28 has שרט לנפש "cuttings in your flesh". There is some distinction between these two terms: the latter is a slight scratch, the former is a deep gash (BDB., s. vv.), though Rabbi Yose (Mak. 21a) is of the opinion that the two words have one and the same meaning. התגדר is used with reference to the ritual of the Baal worshipers in I Kings 18.28. This practice appears to have been known in Palestine as late as the time of Jeremiah (16.6; 41.5; 47.5).

*nor make any baldness between your eyes*] viz. by shaving the forehead. The same prohibition to priests only is found in Lev. 21.5. That this practice was not unusual in Palestine may be seen from Isa. 3.24; 22.12; Jer. 16.6; Ezek. 7.18; Am. 8.10; Mic. 1.16.

2. *thou art a holy people, etc.*] Exactly as 7.6, giving the unique relation of Israel to God as the reason for abstaining from the idolatrous practices of the heathen.

*His own treasure*] See on 7.6.

treasure out of all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.

3-21. CONCERNING CLEAN AND UNCLEAN  
ANIMALS, FISHES, AND BIRDS.

This section has its parallel in Lev. 11.2-20, with which it agrees substantially and almost verbally except that vv 4b-5 of our text, in which the clean animals are enumerated, are wanting there. More precisely, while our text contains both a general definition (v. 6) and a detailed enumeration (vv. 4b-5) of the clean animals, the text in Leviticus has only a general definition of such animals (v. 3). This might lead to the conclusion that our text is earlier than the text of Leviticus, a conclusion which indeed has been promptly accepted by the modern critical school (Wellhausen and his followers), since it suits their hypothesis concerning the very late date of Leviticus or Priestly Code, supposed by them to be later than Deuteronomy. However, upon close examination of the two texts one is struck by the fact that that of Deuteronomy, outside of the increment mentioned above and a few minor and insignificant expansions, is really an epitome or summary of that of Leviticus, and that consequently the latter must be earlier than the former. How, then, should one account for the increment (vv. 4b-5) in our text? Simply by the evident circumstance that Deuteronomy represents a somewhat later stage of development than Leviticus in the life of the Hebrews. According to Tristram (*The City and the Land*, issued by the Palestine Exploration Fund, London, 1892, p. 80, and elsewhere), the enumeration of the edible animals in Deuteronomy is one of the strongest pieces of evidence in favor of the authenticity of that book and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Of these ten animals, he argues, "five or six at least never lived in the Nile valley or in wooded and hilly Palestine: they are inhabitants of desert open plains, or of bare rocky heights. They are not mentioned in Leviticus because immediately after the exodus they would naturally be strange to the Israelites, but after 39 years had been spent in their haunts they would be familiar to them all".

3. Introductory statement, designating all kinds of prohibited food as an abomination, the same opprobrious term with which also idolatry is stamped.

3-4 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. These are the beasts which ye may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the  
 5 goat, the hart, and the gazelle, and the roebuck, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the antelope, and the  
 6 mountain-sheep. And every beast that parteth the hoof,

#### 4-8. CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS.

4. *the ox, the sheep, and the goat*] The most common domestic animals in the Bible, which were generally slaughtered on festive occasions. שֶׁה is *nomen unitatis* of the collective צֹאן and is divided into two species, שֶׁה כְּשִׁבִּים "sheep" and שֶׁה עִזִּים "goat".

5. Enumeration of seven varieties of game.

*hart*] אֵיל (of which the feminine is אֵילִת "hind") is probably fallow deer. It occurs in the Bible as a figure of swiftness (Isa. 35.6).

*gazelle*] צִבִּי, a small antelope, famed for its swiftness and beauty (II Sam. 2.18; Cant. 2.9.).

*roebuck*] יֶחֱמוּר (probably so called because of its reddish color) only here and I Kings 5.3, where it is found among the delicacies served at Solomon's table. Ibn Janah identifies it with Arabic *yakhmur*, a name still given to a deer found on mount Carmel (Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine*, p. 173) and on the Lebanon range (Tristram, *Fauna and Flora of Western Palestine*, p. 4). Comp. also Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, I, 910 ff.; II, 280 ff

*wild goat*] אִקֵּן is a hapax legomenon, which the Targum renders by a word meaning "ibex", a species associated with the En-gedi wilderness (I Sam. 24.3). Comp. Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, I, 900 f.

*pygarg*] דִּישֵׁן, likewise a hapax legomenon, so rendered by the Septuagint on account of the white rump of this species of antelope. Tristram (*Natural History of the Bible*<sup>1</sup>, p. 127) calls it addax and locates it in Egypt and Arabia, more particularly in the Arabah, south of the Dead Sea.

*antelope*] חֲמוֹ, of uncertain etymology, is rendered "oryx" in the Greek versions and the Vulgate, and "wild ox" in the Targum. Its habitat is said to be Egypt, Arabia, and Syria.

*mountain-sheep*] זֶמֶר, a hapax legomenon, is likewise of doubtful etymology. It appears as "wild-goat" in the Targum, as "mountain-goat" in the Peshitta; the Septuagint, Vulgate, Ibn Janah, Kimhi render "giraffe", which, however, is found only in the deserts of Africa.

and hath the hoof wholly cloven in two, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that ye may eat. Nevertheless these 7  
ye shall not eat of them that only chew the cud, or of them  
that only have the hoof cloven: the camel, and the hare,  
and the rock-badger, because they chew the cud but part  
not the hoof, they are unclean unto you; and the swine, 8

6. After the specific statement concerning the edible animals comes a general characterization, corresponding to Lev. 11.3. Two conditions are necessary: they must have completely cloven hoofs and they must chew the cud.

*cheweth the cud*] Literally bringeth up the *gerah*, so called perhaps from the gurgling sound of rumination.

7. *Nevertheless*] Introduces the negative part of this commandment, the provision concerning inedible animals.

*of them that only chew the cud, etc.*] i. e. of the animals that exhibit only one of the two requisite marks of cleanness.

*the camel, and the hare, and the rock-badger*] In Lev. 11.4-6 each one of these is characterized by the phrase "because he cheweth the cud but parteth not the hoof". The camel (גמל) was used both for sacrificial purposes and as food by the ancient Arabs and Nabateans (W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 338 and 574), but was forbidden to Christian Arabs on account of its use in pagan rites (*ibid.*, p. 283); it is still used as food in Arabia (Burton, *Pilgrimage to Madinah and Meccah*, II, 217; Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, II, 209 and 345). The hare (ארנבת) exists in several species in and around Syria (Tristram, *Fauna and Flora of Western Palestine*, pp. 8 f.) and is common in Arabia, where it is used as food (Doughty, *op. cit.*, I, 70, 567; II, 238). The rockbadger (שפן), Arabic *wabr* (so Saadya), is about the size of a small rabbit and is eaten by nomads (Doughty, *op. cit.*, I, 127).

8. An abbreviated version of Lev. 11.7, completed by the Samaritan and the Septuagint for the sake of harmonizing the two texts.

*swine*] חזיר was employed in heathen sacrifices (Isa. 65.4 f.; comp. W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 290 f.), but what made this animal especially objectionable as food was the fact that it feeds indiscriminately and consequently its flesh is liable to



because he parteth the hoof but cheweth not the cud, he is unclean unto you; of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch.

9 These ye may eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever  
10 ever hath fins and scales may ye eat; and whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye shall not eat; it is unclean unto you.

11-2 Of all clean birds ye may eat. But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the great vulture, and the bearded

become infected with many germs and parasites, thus forming a constant danger to its consumer in warm climates. Nevertheless nomad Arabs eat the *khanzir* or wild boar (Musil, *Ethnographischer Bericht*, p. 151).

*but cheweth not the cud*] Literally "but no cud", but the verb is supplied from the corresponding passage in Lev. 11.7.

#### 9-10. CLEAN AND UNCLEAR FISHES.

This is an abbreviated version of Lev. 11.9-12. No piscine species are enumerated, as in the case of the animals, but a general criterion is given to distinguish clean from unclean fish: whatsoever has fins and scales is clean and may be eaten. This rule practically excludes all snake-like fishes (like eels and lampreys) and all crustaceans or shell-fish (like lobsters, crabs, shrimps, etc.). On sacred fish comp. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, pp. 173 ff. and 558.

10. *unclean*] טמא, for which Leviticus has נפש "detestation", a technical term used of prohibited animals.

#### 11-21. CLEAN AND UNCLEAR BIRDS.

This paragraph corresponds to Lev. 11.13-19. Unlike the paragraph on the animals, only the unclean birds are specified, from which the clean may be inferred.

11. An introductory formula, not found in Leviticus.

12. *the great vulture*] or griffon-vulture (נשר), not eagle, as rendered elsewhere. This species of vulture is bald-headed (Mic. 1.16) and majestic in its appearance, the most striking ornithological feature of Palestine (*Tristram, Fauna and Flora of Western Palestine*, pp. 95 f.).

vulture, and the ospray; and the glede, and the falcon, 13  
and the kite after its kinds; and every raven after its 14  
kinds; and the ostrich, and the night-hawk, and the 15

*bearded vulture*] פֶּרֶס, literally "the breaking" or "breaker", the ossifrage (so Authorized Version), the largest and most magnificent of the vulture family. It carries its prey to a great height and then drops it, repeating the operation till the prey is shattered (Tristram, op. cit., p. 94).

*ospray*] עֲוִיָּה, a large hawk which feeds on fish, hence rendered by the Septuagint and Vulgate "sea-eagle".

13. *and the glede, and the falcon, and the kite*] The Hebrew text reads וְהָרָאָה וְהָאֵיָהּ וְהָדִיָּה, whereas the parallel passage in Leviticus has only וְהָרָאָה וְהָאֵיָהּ. It is quite evident that רָאָה, which is not otherwise known as the name of a bird, is a scribal error for דָּאָה "kite" of Leviticus; a marginal correction דִּיה (in which form the word appears in Isa. 34.15) may have entered the text, producing the present tautology. At any rate, the Samaritan and the Septuagint exhibit here the same text as that of Leviticus; and it is further significant that the Talmud (Hul. 63a f.) assumes the identity of רָאָה and דָּאָה as well as of אֵיָה and דִּיה. The root דָּאָה signifies "to dart" (of the eagle), comp. 28.49, hence the noun probably denotes "darter" or "swooper". Bochart associates it with דִּיָּה "ink" and renders "black kite". Tristram, op. cit., pp. 98 and 102, identifies it with both the black kite and the common buzzard. דָּאָה and דִּיה are certainly identical, comp. דִּיָּה in I Sam. 22.18 for דָּאָה. As to אֵיָה, rendered here "falcon", Tristram (op. cit., p. 102) takes it to refer to the red kite, the keenest-sighted of all the birds of prey, comp. Job 28.7.

14. *raven*] עֶרֶב, probably so called on account of its black color. The name is generic, and the Talmud (Hul. 63a) distinguishes several varieties of this bird. Tristram (op. cit., pp. 74 ff.) describes eight species of raven.

15. *ostrich*] בַּת הָעֵנָה, meaning either "daughter of greed" (voracious bird) or "daughter of the desert." The Arabs call it *abū aṣ-ṣahāra*, "father of the plains."

*night-hawk*] חֹמֶס, probably so called on account of its violence. Bochart (*Hierozoicon*, II, 830) construes it as "male ostrich". Tristram (op. cit., p. 90) renders it "barn-owl" (similarly Septuagint and Vulgate).

- 16 sea-mew, and the hawk after its kinds; the little owl, and  
 17 the great owl, and the horned owl; and the pelican, and  
 18 the carrion-vulture, and the cormorant; and the stork, and

*sea-mew*] שחף, a name due to its attenuated body. Sea-mew is an indefinite term, broad enough to include gulls, terns, and petrels, all of which abound on the shore and lakes of Palestine.

*hawk*] נץ is a generic term for all small hawks and predatory birds, such as sparrow-hawk, kestrel, etc., which are abundant in Palestine.

16. *the little owl*] כוס, a name which is perhaps onomatopoeic, refers probably to the southern little owl, which is found everywhere in Palestine and inhabits ruins (comp. Ps. 102.7). The Arabs call it *umm al-kharāb*, "mother of ruins".

*the great owl*] יושף, rendered "ibis" in the Septuagint and Vulgate and "owl" in the Targum and Peshitta. Tristram (op. cit., p. 93) believes that the species alluded to here is the Egyptian eagle-owl, which lives in caves and ruins, and is common about Petra and Beer-sheba.

*horned owl*] תושח, rendered "heron" in the Septuagint and "swan" in the Vulgate. Tristram (op. cit., p. 113) identifies it with the glossy ibis.

17. *pelican*] So Septuagint for תא, which may signify "throwing up" food from its crop for its young. Its habitat was in the wilderness (Ps. 102.7), and it frequented ruins (Isa. 34.11; Zeph. 2.14). Tristram (op. cit., p. 108) styles it roseate pelican, a species frequently found on the Sea of Galilee and also off Tyre.

*carrion-vulture*] רחם (accent on penultimate syllable), for which Lev. 11.18 has רחם, similarly Arabic *rakhim*. Apparently the toneless ending *ah* is not the mark of the feminine (which always has the tone) but an archaic accusative (GKC., § 90c). The bird is said to be a small white carrion eagle haunting the abodes of men, one of the commonest carrion birds of Arabia (Burton, *Pilgrimage to Madinah and Meccah*, II, 62).

*cormorant*] שלך, probably denoting "that hurls itself on the prey". It is a large swimming bird of the pelican family, but distinguished from the pelican by not having a pouch below the lower mandible. It lives on the Mediterranean coast and on the Sea of Galilee, feeding on fish (Tristram, op. cit., p. 107).

18. *stork*] חסידה (so called because it is kind and affectionate to its young), a white heron-like bird, which spends the winter in central

the heron after its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat. And all winged swarming things are unclean unto you; 19 they shall not be eaten. Of all clean winged things ye 20 may eat.

Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself; thou 21 mayest give it unto the stranger that is within thy gates,

and southern Africa and the spring in Europe and Palestine (Tristram, op. cit., pp. 111 f.). It feeds on frogs and small reptiles, or, lacking these, on offal, hence its flesh is rank.

*heron*] So Rashi for אַנפּה, the etymology of which is doubtful. According to Tristram (op. cit., p. 109), it is the common heron, an edible bird, but unclean, because it feeds not only on fish but also on snakes, rats, etc.

*hoopoe*] So Septuagint, Vulgate, Saadya, Rashi, and others, for דוכיפה; but the Targum, Peshitta and the Talmud (Hul. 63a) render it "mountain-cock" (comp. Lewysohn, *Zoologie des Talmuds*, p. 216).

*bat*] עטלף (comp. also Isa. 2.20), haunting caverns and sepulchers, of which Tristram (*The Natural History of the Bible*<sup>20</sup>, pp. 45 f.) enumerates 17 varieties in Palestine.

19. *winged swarming things*] Literally "swarming things of the flying creatures", hence flying or winged insects. The corresponding passage in Lev. 11.20 adds "that go upon all fours".

*unclean*] טמא, for which Leviticus, as usual, has קצו "a detestable thing".

20. *winged things*] חַיָּו here cannot mean "fowl", for this would make our verse a mere repetition of v. 11; no doubt it refers to winged insects, the so-called *saltatoria* or leaping locusts, as opposed to the *cursoria* or running locusts. Accordingly, this is an abbreviated version of Lev. 11.20-23 concerning the edible locusts. Eastern peoples always have considered locusts a delicacy, comp. Burton, *Pilgrimage*, etc., II, 117, and Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I, 472, II, 245 f.

21. *any thing that dieth of itself*] נבלה "carcass, corpse" is the technical term for an animal that falls dead (comp. the synonym מַפְלָה in Judg. 14.8), in contrast to being slaughtered. The flesh of such an animal is prohibited because it was considered unclean and unwholesome.

*thou mayest give it unto the stranger*] This is in contrast to Lev.

that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner; for thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk.

17.15, where the stranger, too, is forbidden to eat that which dieth of itself. This change of rule was probably due to changed social conditions: during their sojourn in the wilderness the attitude of the Israelites to the stranger was very friendly and fraternal, according him equal treatment with the native, but on their entrance into the promised land a strict cleavage took place between the native and the stranger, necessitating a sharp line of demarcation between them.

*foreigner*] נכרי, in contradistinction to גר, is a foreigner who visits Canaan temporarily, chiefly for commercial purposes.

*a holy people*] So above v. 2.

*Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk*] A verbal repetition of Ex. 23.19b and 34.26b. Ibn Ezra on the former passage considers this a humanitarian law, and he mentions a similar prohibition among the Arabs. Maimonides (*Guide to the Perplexed*, III, ch. 48) thinks it was aimed against the pagan custom of using milk thus prepared as a charm for rendering fields and orchards more productive. As a matter of fact, this heathenish practice of boiling a kid in its mother's milk is found as a milk charm in one of the ancient tablets recently discovered at Ras Shamra in Syria and dated as early as the fifteenth century B.C.E. (*Syria*, XIV (1933), 130, 1.14b; comp. also commentary *ibid.*, p. 140). Sir James Frazer (*Folklore in the Old Testament*, III, 110 ff.) points out similar practices among savage tribes and semi-civilized peoples. Max Radin (*American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XL (1923-1924), 209 ff.) endeavored to trace this custom to the Orphic-Dionysiac ceremonial in ancient Greece, where, as it now appears, it had been borrowed from Syria. As is well known, Jewish sources (Targum, Talmud, and rabbinic commentaries) construe this law as an injunction against cooking meat and milk together.

## 22-29. ON TITHES.

This law provides that every Israelite bring a tithe of all the produce of the soil to the central sanctuary and eat it there with his household and the Levites at a sacred feast; if the sanctuary is at a great distance the offerer may turn the tithe into money and then at the sanctuary expend it for such food as he desires and consume it there in the same manner as above. Every third year the tithe is to be dis-

Thou shalt surely tithe all the increase of thy seed, that 22

tributed at home to the poor and needy. This law of tithes seems to conflict with the provision in Num. 18.21 ff., according to which all tithes go to the Levites, who in their turn pay a tenth of what they receive to the priests. Moreover, the Levites were permitted to eat the tithe wherever they pleased, not only at the sanctuary. The Rabbinis endeavored to harmonize this contradiction by the assumption of different kinds of tithes: a first tithe (מעשר ראשון) rendered to the Levites and priests (Num. 18.21 ff.), a second tithe (מעשר שני) consumed by the proprietor with his family, dependents, and guests, in a feast at the sanctuary (Deut. 14.22-27), and a third tithe, the "poor's tithe" (מעשר עני), taking the place of the second tithe in the third and sixth years of each sabbatical or septennial period (ibid. 14.28 f.). The modern critical school assumes that all the references concern one and the same tithe, the differences in the prescriptions being due to variations in time: in Deuteronomic days (which to this school means the seventh century B.C.E.) the tithe was still used as a festal meal for the family and for the benefit of the poor, including the Levites; in the days of Num. 18.21 ff. (which the critical school ascribes to the Priestly Code and considers as posterior to Deuteronomy) the tithe was appropriated entirely to the maintenance of the ministry, the Levites and priests. However, this argument is not at all cogent: It might just as well be maintained that in the primitive Hebrew theocracy of Leviticus, dated soon after the Exodus, when the Israelites lived as a nomad herd and festal meals were out of the question, the tithes went necessarily to the priests and Levites as the poorest and neediest element of the population; while in Deuteronomic times, when the people were about to enter Canaan and develop an extensive national life there, they were instructed not only to bring the tithes, in kind or in money, to the central sanctuary and partake of a festal meal there together with the Levites, but also, in order to encourage general charity to the needy, to use the tithes once in three years for alleviating the suffering and hunger of all the local poor, not alone the priests and Levites, who in a settled community were naturally better provided for than in the desert.

22. *tithe*] i.e. give a tenth part of the agricultural produce. A sacred tithe, exacted from the produce of the soil, was a common institution of antiquity.

*all the increase of thy seed*] This might imply that the tithe is exacted

- 23 which is brought forth in the field year by year. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which He shall choose to cause His name to dwell there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herd and of thy flock; that thou mayest learn to  
 24 fear the LORD thy God always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, because the place is too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set His name there, when the LORD thy

not alone of corn, wine, and oil, as specified in the next verse, but of every kind of produce of the soil, as is assumed by Sifra, Sifre, and Maimonides; but Rashi and RMbN favor the limited construction.

*that which is brought forth in the field*] The Hebrew phrase here has a very unusual construction and is generally regarded as denoting "sprouting forth in the field", צא as in I Kings 5.13 and שרר as an accusative, comp. Gen. 44.4 and Ex. 9.29. RMbN renders "sprouting forth from the field", comp. Gen. 9.10. Less likely is Ibn Ezra's interpretation, "that which the field brings forth", which gives the verb the force of a causative (Hiph'il), as Am. 5.3.

23. This tithe is to be brought to the central sanctuary and consumed there (so also 12.6 f.).

*the firstlings of thy herd and of thy flock*] This would make it appear that Deuteronomy, like Leviticus (27.32), exacts a tithe also of animals, not only of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree (so Knobel, Keil). However, the Rabbis are opposed to such a construction and ascribe the coupling of "the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil" with "the firstlings of thy herd and of thy flock" to the influence of 12.17. Perhaps, too, the firstlings which are treated separately in 15.19 ff. are mentioned here because it was customary to offer them at the same time as the tithe (Dillmann, and others).

*learn to fear, etc.*] Through the exercise of the duty of tithing you may learn the benefit of obedience to God.

24. *to carry it*] Namely the tithe. This expression proves that only vegetables and fruits are implied, not animals.

God shall bless thee; then shalt thou turn it into money, <sup>25</sup> and bind up the money in thy hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose. And thou <sup>26</sup> shalt bestow the money for whatsoever thy soul desireth, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul asketh of thee; and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household. And the Levite that is within <sup>27</sup> thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee.

At the end of every three years, even in the same year, <sup>28</sup>

*bless thee]* viz. through an increase of the produce, thereby augmenting the bulk of the tithe.

**25. *turn it into money]*** Literally "give it for money", i. e. exchange it for money.

*bind up the money in thy hand]* Ordinarily money was carried in a purse placed at the girdle (comp. 25.13 ff.; Isa. 46.6; Prov. 16.11); here the inference is that the purse, of whatever form it was, was attached to the fingers or wrist.

**26. *whatsoever thy soul desireth]*** The soul is the seat of the appetite, comp. on 12.20.

*for oxen, etc.]* The exchange may be made for animal food, not alone vegetables and fruits.

*wine...strong drink]* Both יין and שכר apparently were intoxicating drinks, hence they are denounced in I Sam. 1.15; Isa. 5.11, 22; 28.7; Mic. 2.11; and Prov. 20.1. But the latter probably was a stronger drink than the former, hence the adjective שָׂכָר "drunkard" was formed from it.

*rejoice]* See on 12.7. This festal meal was to be an occasion for conviviality and merry-making.

**27. *the Levite]*** Comp. on 12.12.

#### 28-29. TRIENNIAL TITHE FOR THE POOR.

**28. *At the end of every three years]*** Every third year, called "the tithe year" in 26.12, the tithe was to be devoted to the relief of the poor and needy at home. Since every seventh year was a year of



thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase, and  
 29 shalt lay it up within thy gates. And<sup>c</sup> the Levite, because  
 he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the  
 stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are  
 within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied;  
 that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of  
 thy hand which thou doest.

release, when no dues were required to be paid (comp. 15.1 ff.), it follows that this triennial tithe for the poor fell due every third and sixth year in each sabbatical or septennial period.

*bring forth*] Namely from the granary.

*within thy gates*] i. e. in your various communities, probably stored up in public places for public distribution.

29. *the Levite, etc.*] Those that are poor and unprotected, so 10.18; 16.11, 14; 24.17, 19 ff.; 26.12 f.; 27.19, and elsewhere.

*may bless thee*] viz. for the philanthropic work of relieving the poor in their distress.

## CHAPTER 15.

### LAWS DESIGNED TO AMELIORATE THE CONDITION OF THE POOR.

#### 1-6. SHEMITAH OR THE YEAR OF RELEASE.

This humanitarian law provides that every seventh year the creditor shall remit, permanently or temporarily, any loan made to his fellow-citizen. The term used for the act of remission is *ḥṣṣ*, which is applied also to a similar act of septennial remission in Ex. 23.10 f., namely a remission of the produce of the fields, vineyards and oliveyards, that the poor may eat it. The latter is repeated in Lev. 25.1-7, with the additional emphasis that every seventh year is a year of solemn rest or sabbath. It is quite evident that these laws, in spite of variations, are closely related to one another: Since the cultivation of the land was suspended during the seventh year, and as a consequence the land-owners became impoverished, it became necessary to provide a remission of loans made to them by their richer neighbors and falling due in that year. In other words, the law of Deuteronomy supplements and completes the provisions of Exodus and Leviticus, and

At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a 15

*Shemittah* or the year of release is identical with the sabbatical year, viz. every seventh year. As to the general and comprehensive nature of the Deuteronomic law, which includes every kind of debt, in contradistinction to the specific character of the law of Exodus and Leviticus, it may be explained by the fact that the latter was intended for a nomad people in the desert, while the former is designed for a nation about to settle in a civilized country and develop commercial alongside with agricultural activities. The critical school, which believes that Deuteronomy is a product of the seventh century, explains the Deuteronomic law as a later expansion of the earlier law, "applied so as to meet the requirements of a more developed state of society than that contemplated in Ex. 21-23, its benefits being extended to a class, who, in the more highly organized civic life and the increasing opposition between rich and poor which prevailed under Solomon and his successors, were, it may be, even more in need of relief than those originally benefited by the law of Exodus" (Driver).

This benevolent law, like other laws designed for the benefit of the distressed debtor (comp. 23.20 f.; 24.10 ff.), was probably never enforced as public law for any length of time. In later years, when trade and commerce were developed to a high degree, the law was found impracticable, and creditors naturally resorted to various expedients in order to evade its provisions. Thus Hillel (1st century B.C.E.) found it necessary to amend the Deuteronomic law by the institution of *Prosbul*, i. e. a formal declaration made in court, before the execution of a loan, to the effect that the law requiring the release of debts upon the entrance of the sabbatical year shall not apply to the loan to be transacted (Mishna, Sheb. 10.3 f.). In addition to this, the following debts were excluded from the law of *Shemittah*: wages, merchandise on credit, loans on pledges, a note guaranteed by mortgage, etc.

1. *At the end of every seven years*] The Hebrew phrase does not necessarily mean "at the end of seven years", as interpreted by some commentators not without reason, but rather "at the end of every period of seven years", which was understood to mean "in the seventh year", from the beginning to the end of the seventh year (Ibn Ezra, RMbN). This is clearly illustrated from Jer. 34.14, where the same phrase corresponds to the expression "in the seventh year" of our text (v. 12). Comp. also 14.28, "at the end of every three years", denoting "in every third year".

- 2 release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbour; he shall not exact it of his neighbour and his brother; because the LORD's release hath been proclaimed.
- 3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it; but whatsoever of
- 4 thine is with thy brother thy hand shall release. Howbeit there shall be no needy among you—for the LORD will surely bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God

*a release*] מַסַּח, literally "a letting drop" (of exactions), "a remitting" (of debts). Whether this was a permanent or only temporary remission of debts (a moratorium for one year) is not sufficiently disclosed by the text: the former view is adopted by Philo (*de septenario*, II, 284), the Rabbis of the Talmud (Mishna, Sheb. 10.1), and some Christian scholars (Gesenius, Wellhausen, etc.); the latter interpretation is embraced by most modern commentators, who consider the former as too evidently communistic and Utopian.

2. *every creditor, etc.*] More literally "every possessor of a loan of his hand shall renounce what he lends to his neighbour" (so Driver in accordance with the accents). קֶשֶׁה is a noun meaning "loan", derived from נָשָׂה "to lend".

*his brother*] Meant as a synonym of "his neighbour", hence properly "his fellow-citizen".

*hath been proclaimed*] קָרָא, properly "one hath proclaimed", the subject being indefinite and understood (GKC., § 144d-e). This active verb is naturally rendered in the passive in English.

3. *foreigner*] See on 14.21. A foreigner who visits Canaan for business only should be made to pay his debts also in the seventh year, since he is not obliged to discontinue his business during that year.

*but whatsoever, etc.*] Repetition of v. 2 for the sake of contrast and emphasis.

4. *Howbeit, etc.*] An exceptive clause (GKC., § 163c), introducing a qualification: if Israel proves obedient to God there will be no need for the law of release, since there will be no poor and needy in the land, and the Israelites will lend unto many nations but not borrow from them (Sifre, Ibn Ezra, Abravanel, and most modern commentators).

*for the Lord will surely bless thee, etc.*] This entire clause is parenthetical.

giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it — if only thou 5  
diligently hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God,  
to observe to do all this commandment which I command  
thee this day. For the LORD thy God will bless thee, as 6  
He promised thee; and thou shalt lend unto many nations,  
but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt rule over many  
nations, but they shall not rule over thee.

If there be among you a needy man, one of thy brethren, 7  
within any of thy gates, in thy land which the LORD thy  
God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor  
shut thy hand from thy needy brother; but thou shalt 8  
surely open thy hand unto him, and shalt surely lend him  
sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth. Beware 9

6. *will bless thee*] Properly "will have blessed thee" (Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 23), namely in case you are obedient.

*lend*] עָבַט means "to give a pledge" (on the occasion of borrowing), hence "to borrow on a pledge". The Hiph'il thus signifies "to cause to borrow on a pledge" or "to lend on a pledge to someone".

*thou shalt rule over many nations*] For financial superiority naturally leads to political supremacy.

#### 7-11. ASSISTANCE TO THE POOR.

This philanthropic provision is prompted by the preceding law of release: The release of debts every seventh year should not deter the rich from lending to the poor at the approach of that year.

7. *a needy man*] אִבְיוֹן is literally "one who desires", because he has not.

*one of thy brethren*] מֵאַחַד מֵאַחֶיךָ instead of מֵאַחֶיךָ; for a similar construction see Lev. 4.2 and Ezek. 18.10.

*gates*] i. e. cities, see on 12.12.

*harden thy heart*] Similarly 2.30.

*shut thy hand*] So as not to lend.

8. *lend*] See above on v. 6

that there be not a base thought in thy heart, saying: 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand'; and thine eye be evil against thy needy brother, and thou give him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee,  
 10 and it be sin in thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the LORD thy God will bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou puttest thy hand  
 11 unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying: 'Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy poor and needy brother, in thy land.'

9. *a base thought*] Literally "a word...baseness", two nouns in apposition, comp. GKC., § 131c; on the meaning of בליעל comp. 13.14.

*the seventh year*] The Hebrew has the cardinal instead of the ordinal numeral, comp. GKC., § 134o.

*thine eye be evil*] i. e. envious and grudging, so 28.54 and 56.

*it be sin in thee*] A characteristic expression found also in 23.22; 24.15, etc.

10. *thy heart shall not be grieved*] Really "be evil". The giver is supposed to give cheerfully, not grudgingly.

*in all that thou puttest thy hand unto*] Comp. on 12.7.

11. *the poor shall never cease, etc.*] This is not in conflict with v. 4 above, where the wish was expressed that if the Israelites are obedient to God there would not be any poor in the land. As a matter of fact, the author continues, there will always be people in need of help and assistance, especially since they are prone to be disobedient and rebellious (RMbN).

## 12-18. LAW CONCERNING SLAVES.

In line with the laws of the septennial release of the produce of the land and contracted debts is the law of the septennial discharge of slaves; Hebrew slaves, unless they choose to stay with their master indefinitely, are to be freed in the seventh year of their service. This law is based on Ex. 21.2-6, from which it differs in several minor points,

If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be <sup>12</sup>  
 sold unto thee, he shall serve thee six years; and in the  
 seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And <sup>13</sup>

such as the mention of bondwoman in addition to bondman, the provision of gifts for the freed slave, etc. More precisely, the law in Deuteronomy is more humane than that in Exodus, which leads some critics of the Pentateuch to the assumption that the former is a much later modification of the latter. The conservative or traditional point of view is expressed by Rashi, who maintains that the additional features of the law in Deuteronomy are due entirely to the changed conditions facing the Israelites at the threshold of Canaan, when the rigors of their nomadic life gave place to the expected security of a settled state. There is still another law of slavery in Lev. 25.39-46, according to which Hebrew slaves are to be freed in the year of Jubilee, i. e. the fiftieth year after seven sabbatical cycles, but foreign slaves may be held for life. To harmonize this law with those in Exodus and Deuteronomy Jewish commentators resort to the view that the former was intended to provide that if the Jubilee year arrived before a Hebrew slave's seventh year of service he was to receive his liberty in the Jubilee year. Modern critics, on the other hand, maintain that the law in Leviticus represents a later stage in Hebrew history, when the manumission of slaves every seventh year was found to be impracticable, hence it was deferred to the fiftieth year. The best argument against this view is the fact that the institutions of both *Shemittah* and Jubilee appear to have been quite ancient and not uncommon in the Orient, since they occur in the cuneiform Nuzi texts of the fifteenth pre-Christian century (published by Edward Chiera, Paris, 1927-1934). In later years, after the exile, they fell into desuetude along with other laws and institutions (see George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, I, 340, note 1).

12. This verse is quoted, with slight verbal variations, in Jer. 34.14a.

or a Hebrew woman] Wanting in Ex. 21.2 f., where it is enjoined instead that a woman coming into service with her husband should receive her freedom when he does, but a daughter sold by her father as a bondwoman must not go free as bondmen do (ibid. v. 7).

in the seventh year] Not necessarily the sabbatical year (comp. Yer. Kid. 59a).

when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not  
 14 let him go empty; thou shalt furnish him liberally out of  
 thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy  
 winepress; of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath  
 15 blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt  
 remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt,  
 and the LORD thy God redeemed thee; therefore I com-  
 16 mand thee this thing to-day. And it shall be, if he say  
 unto thee: 'I will not go out from thee'; because he loveth  
 thee and thy house, because he fareth well with thee;

13. *empty*] i.e. "without a gift", similarly 16.16; Gen. 31.42; I Sam. 6.3, and elsewhere.

14. *thou shalt furnish him liberally*] The Hebrew verb is a denominative of נָשָׂא "a necklace" and means literally "thou shalt make a rich necklace for him" from thy flock, etc., which is a figure for "richly load him" with gifts.

*out of thy flock, etc.*] According to the Talmud (Kid. 17a), the items enumerated are only exemplary and do not exhaust the gifts: one should give to the slave of everything except money.

15. The motive for such philanthropic action is the fact that the Israelites themselves had been slaves in Egypt, whence God redeemed them; similarly 5.15; 16.12; 24.18, 22.

16-17. A parenthetic clause providing for the perpetual retention of a slave if the latter so wills it.

16. *because he fareth well with thee*] This explanatory clause is wanting in Exodus.

17. The parallel passage in Exodus (21.6) exhibits a variant here: before the performance of the ceremony the master is to bring the slave unto God, i.e. to the sanctuary at which judgment is administered, probably for the purpose of making a public declaration of his desire to stay with his master. Indeed, the Targum Yerushalmi on our passage felt this discrepancy and hence supplied the statement that the ceremony is to be performed publicly in court. Now critics of the Pentateuch, who are of the opinion that the Book of Deuteronomy

then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his <sup>17</sup> ear and into the door, and he shall be thy bondman for ever. And also unto thy bondwoman thou shalt do likewise.

is centuries later than the so-called Book of the Covenant (Exodus chapters 21–23), claim that the Deuteronomic slavery law is a later modification of that of Exodus, the latter prescribing a public and official ceremony, while in the former the ceremony is private and domestic. However, such an assumption is quite unnecessary. The Deuteronomic Code being only a resumé of former legislation, there is no reason why every detail of a law should be repeated: Only the chief features are given, while details are left to be inferred. Thus the public declaration of the slave is omitted, while the more important act of piercing his ear is stated. It stands to reason that the latter act must have taken place in private at the master's home, since the act symbolized the fact that henceforth the slave belonged to the master's household. At any rate, there is no absolute evidence to the contrary in Exodus, where the declaration is certainly public, but the piercing of the ear might have been private.

*an awl*] The Hebrew has the definite article, which is a peculiar usage to denote a single thing as being present to the mind under given circumstances (GKC., § 126.4).

*and thrust it through his ear and into the door*] A circumlocution for "pin his ear to the door", similarly I Sam. 18.11. Piercing the ear was a token of slavery and obedience to the master, and its performance at the door was for the purpose of indicating that henceforth the slave belonged to the master's household.

*for ever*] The Rabbis (so also Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV. 8.28) interpreted this to mean until the Jubilee year, i. e. the fiftieth year occurring after seven times seven years had been counted from the institution of the festival or from the last Jubilee (Lev. 25.8 ff.).

*likewise*] If a bondwoman chooses to stay with her master, perform the same ceremony with her as with the bondman. This is the modern interpretation, but Jewish tradition (comp. also Josephus, *ibid.*) takes this phrase to refer only to the humane treatment recommended in vv. 12–15, not to the piercing of the ear, which could not apply to a woman.



- 18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou lettest him go free from thee; for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee six years; and the LORD thy God will bless thee in all that thou doest.
- 19 All the firstling males that are born of thy herd and of

18. *It shall not seem hard*] That the manumission of slaves did seem hard to the Israelites may be seen from Jer. 34.14, where they are rebuked for not having fulfilled the stipulations of this covenant.

*the double of the hire of a hireling*] The meaning is that had a hired laborer been engaged in his stead he would have cost his master twice as much.

*God will bless thee, etc.*] Namely for the manumission of slaves.

#### 19-23. LAW CONCERNING FIRSTLINGS.

This law properly belongs to the end of chapter 14, immediately after the law of tithes, to which it is closely related (comp. *ibid.* v. 23); but mention of the third year in 14.28 carried with it the laws of the seventh year in chapter 15, after which the author reverts to the law of firstlings. According to this law every male firstling of oxen and of sheep is to be dedicated to God and is to be consumed annually by the owner and his family at the central sanctuary; if it has a blemish it cannot be sacrificed, but it may be eaten as ordinary food at home, provided the blood is dispensed with. This law agrees on the whole with the parallel laws in Ex. 13.11 ff.; Lev. 27.26 ff.; and Num. 18.15 ff., except for the provision of v. 20 that the firstling is to be eaten by the owner and his household: according to the statement in Numbers the flesh of the firstling belongs to the priests. Various attempts at harmonization have been made, but none of them are quite satisfactory. Jewish commentators (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, etc.) simply claim that the command "thou shalt eat it" in v. 20 is addressed to the officiating priest, not to the offerer. Modern critics, as usual, take the two variant provisions to refer to two different periods of Hebrew history: in the earlier period the firstlings were the property of the priests, in the later period they were to be consumed by the owner.

19. *the firstling males*] הוֹכֵר is in apposition with הַבְּכוֹר.

thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the LORD thy God; thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thine ox, nor shear the firstling of thy flock. Thou shalt eat it before 20 the LORD thy God year by year in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household. And if there 21 be any blemish therein, lameness, or blindness, any ill blemish whatsoever, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt eat it within thy gates; the 22 unclean and the clean may eat it alike, as the gazelle, and as the hart. Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; 23 thou shalt pour it out upon the ground as water.

*thou shalt sanctify, etc.]* Similarly Ex. 13.2.

*do no work, etc.]* These provisions hold good with reference to any other sacrificial animal (Sifre).

20. *before the Lord, etc.]* Comp. 12.5. The firstling should be eaten in its first year, but this does not exclude the possibility of its being used for that purpose at a more advanced age (Sifre).

21. *blemish]* This rule applies to all sacrifices, comp. Lev. 22.17 ff.; also below 17.1.

*sacrifice it]* Although the preceding verses do not mention that the firstling is to be offered as a sacrifice to God, nevertheless it is evident from the present clause, as well as from the parallel passages in Ex. 13.15 and Num. 18.17 f., that this is a legitimate inference. It goes to prove once more that Deuteronomy is not an independent book, separated by centuries from the other books of the Pentateuch, but rather a resumé of and supplement to its four companions, promulgated for the sake of rounding out the earlier Mosaic legislation and making it suitable for a nomadic nation about to be settled in a land of its own.

22-23. The same prescriptions as 12.15-16, involving animals slaughtered for food: the flesh of such animals may be eaten away from the central sanctuaries, wherever one happens to dwell, on condition that the blood is poured out on the ground.

# 16 Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto

## CHAPTER 16.

### 1-17. THE THREE PRINCIPAL FEASTS.

This section is an amplification of Ex. 23.14 ff. and 34.22 f. It provides that three times during the year every Israelite is to make a pilgrimage (this is the original meaning of the Hebr. פָּקַד, as proved by the Arabic *haj* or pilgrimage to Mecca) to the central sanctuary for the purpose of offering sacrifices to God and performing other religious rites. It differs from the similar though more elaborate statements in Lev. chapter 23 and Num. chapters 28-29 in that it omits the fixed seasons or set feasts (מוֹעֲדִים, derived from a root denoting "to appoint a time") which could be celebrated at home and did not require a pilgrimage, such as New Year, Day of Atonement, etc. Critics of the Pentateuch construe this omission as pointing to the late origin of these penitential feasts and their non-existence in the days of Deuteronomy, which would mean that they are post-exilic. On the other hand, conservative scholars, who are convinced that the book of Deuteronomy has the character of an epitome or synopsis, maintain that the author was chiefly concerned here with the three pilgrimage festivals and consequently passed over the penitential feasts in silence, though taking them for granted.

The three principal feasts or pilgrimages must have been originally general agricultural festivals, instituted for the purpose of offering thanks to God for blessing the land and granting an abundant crop. Passover was a spring festival celebrated in the month Abib (meaning "fresh ears" of barley), when the sickle was first put to the standing corn (see below v. 9) and a sheaf of the first ears of barley was presented at the sanctuary (Lev. 23.9 ff.); the Feast of Weeks is known also as the Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23.16), when wheat was harvested throughout the land; while the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles is also called the Feast of Ingathering (*ibid.*), when all the products of the year from grain field, olive-yard, and vineyard were garnered. After the great and eventful experiences in the desert these festivals assumed also a historical character, Passover commemorating the exodus from Egypt, the Feast of Weeks representing the delivery of the Torah on mount Sinai, and the Feast of Booths recalling the troublous years of wandering in the wilderness.

the LORD thy God; for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. And <sup>2</sup> thou shalt sacrifice the passover-offering unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to cause His name to dwell there. Thou shalt <sup>3</sup>

### 1-8. THE FEAST OF PASSOVER.

1. *the month of Abib*] אֲבִיב, an archaic, Canaanite name, is the month of ripening ears and is used mostly with reference to the exodus from Egypt and the eating of unleavened bread (Ex. 13.4; 23.15; etc.). It was known also as the first month (Ex. 12.2, etc.) and corresponded to the post-exilic month of Nisan (either March or April).

*the passover*] So called because God passed over the houses of the Hebrews when He smote the Egyptian first-born on the eve of the exodus (Ex. 12.13, 23, 27).

*by night*] Comp. Ex. 12.31.

2. *of the flock and the herd*] In Ex. 12.3 ff. a lamb is prescribed for the paschal sacrifice. Orthodox opinion holds that a lamb was used only on the first Passover, which was celebrated in Egypt, but that subsequently sheep and oxen took its place (Ibn Ezra, Luzzatto). Another harmonistic view is to the effect that the sacrifice mentioned in Deuteronomy is not the sacrifice for Passover proper, which must have been a lamb, but rather one of the private sacrifices offered during the seven days of *Mazzot* immediately following the night of Passover (comp. II Chron. 30.22 ff.; 35.7 ff.), which were analogous to the peace-offerings termed חֲוִיָּה (Mishna, Pes. 6.3 f.) and were voluntary, not obligatory like the Passover sacrifice (Sifre, Hoffmann ad loc.). Critics of the Pentateuch, on the other hand, hold that the two laws quoted above represent the usage of two different stages in the history of the feast of Passover (comp. Driver ad loc. and also in his Commentary on Exodus, Appendix 1).

*in the place, etc.*] So below vv. 6, 7, 11, 15, 16.

3. *Thou shalt eat, etc.*] Some critics have made an endeavor to separate *Pesah* from *Mazzot* and prove that these two represent two distinct festivals having nothing in common. For this purpose they are compelled to eliminate the part of our sentence referring to *Mazzot*, asserting that it is a later insertion. However, *Pesah* and *Mazzot* must

eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for in haste didst thou come forth out of the land of Egypt; that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy  
 4 life. And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days; neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day at even, remain all  
 5 night until the morning. Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover-offering within any of thy gates, which the LORD

have been associated very early in the history of Israel, for Ezekiel (45.21) takes their combination for granted.

*leavened bread*] The reason for its prohibition was that it produces fermentation and is subject to putrefaction and corruption. Hence, too, the use of leaven was forbidden in all meal-offerings (Lev. 2.11).

*unleavened bread*] *Mazzot*, not being subject to fermentation, were presented as offerings to God (Lev. 2.4 f.) and were used also in ordinary life, because they could be prepared quickly.

*the bread of affliction*] Because it served as food of the Israelites on their hasty departure from Egypt after a long period of slavery.

*all the days of thy life*] Similarly 4.9 and 6.2.

4. *leaven*] *חמץ*, of unknown derivation, is a synonym of *חמץ* in the preceding verse. The repetition of the prohibition of leavened bread is for emphasis; similarly Ex. 13.7.

*the first day at even*] Literally "in the evening, on the first day" (of Passover), hence in the evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan, which in the Hebrew calendar (where the evening belongs to the following day) meant the beginning of the fifteenth day of Nisan (Lev. 23.5 f.).

*until the morning*] The entire paschal sacrifice was to be consumed in the evening, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and nothing was to be left over until the following morning (Ex. 12.8 ff.).

5-7. Another reminder that the paschal sacrifice must be offered at a central, not a local, sanctuary.

5. *any of thy gates*] i. e. any of the cities in which you happen to dwell.

thy God giveth thee; but at the place which the Lord 6  
 thy God shall choose to cause His name to dwell in, there  
 thou shalt sacrifice the passover-offering at even, at the  
 going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest  
 forth out of Egypt. And thou shalt roast and eat it in 7  
 the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; and thou  
 shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents.

6. *at even*] The parallel passage in Ex. 12.6 has בין הערבים "between the two evenings", i. e. towards sunset or at dusk (comp. Talmud, Shab. 34b בין השמשות = at twilight), which Sifre and Rashi interpret as meaning from six o'clock onward, while Josephus (*Jewish War*, VI. 9.3) fixes it between the ninth and eleventh hour.

*season*] מועד might mean "appointed period" (Hoffmann) or "appointed hour" (Driver).

7. *thou shalt roast*] בשל properly means "to boil" or "to cook", which might be in conflict with Ex. 12.9, where the provision is that the paschal lamb should be roasted; but II Chron. 35.13 proves that "cook with fire", in contrast to "cook with water", may mean "to roast". The Septuagint, curiously enough, has both "boil" and "roast".

*turn in the morning and go unto thy tents*] Many commentators find themselves in a quandary here: How could the Israelites be told to travel home on the first day of Passover, which seems to be implied in this phrase? Some of them see themselves forced to assume that "unto thy tents" does not mean "to your homes", but rather "to your dwellings" in the holy city (Riehm, Bachmann, Keil, Schultz, following an interpretation of the Karaite Aaron ben Elijah in his *Sefer Mizvot*, chapter 3 of the section dealing with Passover). Others believe that already in the morning of the 15th of Nisan the pilgrims were permitted to proceed to an inn outside of Jerusalem, where they sojourned until the morning of the 16th and then departed on their way home (Ibn Ezra, Rashi on Pes. 95b). Another opinion is that by morning here is meant the morning of the seventh day of the festival (Targum Yerushalmi, Tosafot on Suk. 47a, R. H. 5a, etc.). A more plausible view is that the reference actually points to the morning of the 16th of Nisan, since the paschal sacrifice was accompanied by peace-offerings which were presented not only on the evening but also during the day of the 15th of Nisan, and the phrase "thou shalt

- 8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God; thou shalt do no work therein.
- 9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee; from the

roast and eat" includes both of them (Rashi ad loc., Abravanel, and others). Finally, there are some old and modern expositors who see nothing objectionable in the permission to travel home on the holiday, especially since according to the Tosafot on Hag. 17b the Torah does not prohibit traveling on a holiday.

8. *Six days*] But Ex. 13.6 f. and v. 3 of the text before us make it imperative to eat unleavened bread seven days. Hence the Rabbis claim that the six days mentioned in this verse are subsequent to the first day of Passover, after the pilgrims had returned home and begun the new crop, so that the unleavened bread of the first day of Passover was made of the old crop, while that of the six days was prepared from the new crop (Sifre). Modern commentators see nothing difficult in this verse, which they interpret as follows: six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day, in addition to eating unleavened bread, there shall also be a solemn assembly to the Lord thy God.

*the seventh day*] Meaning, according to the Rabbis, the last of the six days mentioned above.

*a solemn assembly*] עֲצֵרָה, derived from a root denoting "to hold in, confine", especially for a religious purpose. This ceremony was of a domestic character and was solemnized at home. Elsewhere (Ex. 12.14; Lev. 23.6; Num. 28.17) the seventh day, like the first day, is called "holy convocation", and in Ex. 13.7 it is even referred to as a מִן or a day of pilgrimage to God, on a par with the first day. Yet it could hardly have had the same sacrosanct character as the first day, and undoubtedly the name מִן given to it in Exodus is of local and domestic significance and may even be analogous to עֲצֵרָה.

*no work*] Some manuscripts, the Samaritan and the Septuagint have "no manner of work" (כָּל מְלָאכָה), as in Ex. 12.16.

### 9-12. THE FEAST OF WEEKS.

Parallel accounts are found in Ex. 23.16 and 34.22; Lev. 23.15 ff.; Num. 28.26 ff.

9. *Seven weeks, etc.*] The time when these seven weeks begin is

time the sickle is first put to the standing corn shalt thou begin to number seven weeks. And thou shalt keep the 10 feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God after the measure of the freewill-offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give according as the LORD thy God blesseth thee. And thou 11 shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the

determined more exactly in Lev. 23.15: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the day of rest (ממחרת השבת), from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the waving", which, according to rabbinic interpretation, is the morning of the 16th day of Nisan (Sifra ad. loc.). The passage in Leviticus adds to "seven weeks", for further elucidation, "fifty days" (whence the rabbinic name of the festival יום חמשים and the Greek name Pentecost). Hence the Feast of Weeks always falls on the 6th day of the month of Sivan. But the Samaritan and Karaite sects took the phrase ממחרת השבת literally as denoting "from the morrow after the sabbath", i. e. from Sunday, hence in their calendar the Feast of Weeks always falls on a Sunday. Concerning this point a bitter controversy was waged between the early Karaites and Rabbinites.

*from the time, etc.*] The time of the beginning of the harvest is determined by v. 7: "and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents". Accordingly, the harvest began as soon as the pilgrims had returned home from the Passover pilgrimage.

*sickle*] חרמש, a noun of peculiar formation, occurs only here and in 23.26.

10. *thou shalt keep*] Literally "thou shalt perform", similarly Ex. 34.22, comp. also above v. 1.

*the feast of weeks*] So also Ex. 34.22; but *ibid.* 23.16 it is styled "feast of harvest", and in Num. 28.26 it is called "day of the first-fruits".

*after the measure, etc.*] מֶקֶט is a hapax legomenon of obscure derivation, but it occurs frequently in Aramaic in the sense of "sufficiency, enough" (so Rashi, RSbM, etc.). The meaning is that each one is to make an offering according to his own estimate of his means.

11. *And thou shalt rejoice, etc.*] Similarly 12.12, 18; 14.29.



- stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee, in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt; and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.
- 13 Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy winepress. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose; because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase,

12. *And thou shalt remember, etc.*] The motive for succoring the poor and needy is, as usual (comp. 15.15), the fact of Israel's bondage in Egypt and his redemption therefrom through the aid of God.

### 13-15. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

Parallel accounts are found in Ex. 23.16; 34.22; Lev. 23.33 ff.; Num. 29.12 ff.

13. *the feast of tabernacles*] חג הסוכות, which, according to the parallel passages in Leviticus and Numbers, extended from the 15th to the 21st of the seventh month (Tishri), and was followed by an additional day of solemn assembly on the 22d of that month. In Exodus this feast is known as the feast of ingathering (חג האסף) and elsewhere it appears as the feast or pilgrimage (חג) par excellence (I Kings 8.2, 65; Ezek. 45.25, etc.).

14. *thou shalt rejoice, etc.*] As above v. 11.

15. *Seven days, etc.*] While on Passover the Israelites were permitted to return home the following morning, on the feast of tabernacles they were enjoined to spend all the seven days at the central sanctuary.

and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful. Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which He shall choose: on the feast of unleavened bread, and on the feast of weeks, and on the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which He hath given thee. 16 17

*altogether joyful*] More literally "only joyful", or "nought but joyful". This repetition of the statement in the beginning of v. 14 is to emphasize that the feast of tabernacles is to be an occasion of unalloyed joy for God's blessings and bounties heaped upon the soil.

16-17. Resumé of the legislation concerning the three principal festivals.

16. *Three times in a year, etc.*] Similarly Ex. 23.17 and 34.23.

*thy males*] זכור, a collective noun occurring three times besides (20.13; Ex. 23.17 and 34.23), always with a suffix, possibly to differentiate it from the common זכר, which never takes a suffix.

*before*] אה פני, so Ex. 34.23, but Ex. 23.17 has אל פני instead, which suits better the construction with the verb in the Niph'al (יִרְאֶה). Some expositors, however, hold that the verb was read originally in the Kal (יִרְאֶה) and was changed subsequently to the Niph'al form in order to avoid the anthropomorphism of seeing the face of God (comp. Geiger, *Urschrift*, p. 337).

*in the place which He shall choose*] This phrase, which expresses the characteristic idea of Deuteronomy about a central sanctuary, is naturally wanting in the parallel passages of Ex. 23.17 and 34.23.

*empty*] See on 15.13.

17. *every man shall give as he is able*] Literally, "according to the gift of his hand", i. e. an offering such as his hand can afford to give.

#### 18-20. APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES TO ADMINISTER JUSTICE IMPARTIALLY.

The Hebrew judicial system is not very clearly defined. From Ex. 21.6 and 22.7 f. it might be inferred that in ancient Israel judicial decisions were delivered by God at a sanctuary. Ex. 18.13 ff. informs

- 18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, tribe by tribe; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.
- 19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a gift; for a gift doth

us that Moses was the sole judge of Israel in the desert, but that upon the advice of his father-in-law Jethro he appointed assistant judges to handle cases of less moment. Before his death, when the Israelites were about to enter the promised land and become a settled nation, Moses ordered the appointment of judges in every city (in the passage before us) and gave further instructions to refer all difficult cases to the priests for adjudication (17.8 ff.; 19.15 ff.). With the establishment of the kingdom in later years the king naturally assumed supreme judicial authority, though few cases were actually adjudicated by him personally. The judicial system established by king Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 19.5-11), which prescribed judges for every city in Judah and a supreme judicial tribunal in Jerusalem consisting of Levites, priests, and heads of families, seems to have been modeled after the Deuteronomic system. For further parallels comp. Ex. 23.1-3, 6-8, and Lev. 19.15, 35.

18. *Judges*] Comp. 1.16.

*officers*] i. e. executors of judicial decrees; see on 1.15.

*in all thy gates*] i. e. in all thy cities, see on 12.12.

*tribe by tribe*] As in 1.13, 15. This prescription is very general and fails to indicate the number of the judges, the method of their selection, etc. According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, IV.8.14), every city had a court of seven judicial officers, to which two Levites were attached as servants. According to the Mishna (*Sanh.* 1.1), civil cases were judged by three, capital cases by twenty-three judges. In talmudic times there were three kinds of court, one of three, one of twenty-three (סנהדרין קטנה), and one of seventy-one judges (סנהדרין גדולה).

*righteous judgment*] The primary duty of the judges is to administer justice impartially and without any bias or preconceived notion, a duty which is further stressed in the following verse.

19. *Thou shalt not wrest judgment*] The parallel passage in Ex. 23.6 reads: "Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause".

*respect persons*] See on 1.17.

*neither shalt thou take a gift, etc.*] So Ex. 23.8, except for a slight

blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. Justice, justice shalt thou follow, that thou <sup>20</sup> mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah of any kind of <sup>21</sup> tree beside the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. Neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar, <sup>22</sup> which the LORD thy God hateth.

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God an ox, <sup>17</sup> or a sheep, wherein is a blemish, even any evil thing; for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

verbal variation ("those who have sight" instead of "the eyes of the wise").

20. *Justice, justice*] The repetition is for emphasis, comp. 2.27.

#### 21-22. PROHIBITION OF SACRED TREES AND PILLARS.

This passage seems to be out of place here: perhaps it belonged originally to chapter 13 dealing with the worship of foreign gods (Dillmann). For a parallel injunction comp. Lev. 26.1. The destruction of the sacred trees and pillars of the Canaanites has been ordered also in 7.5 and 12.3.

21. *Asherah*] See on 7.5.

22. *a pillar*] Comp. *ibid.*

*hateth*] So 12.31.

#### CHAPTER 17.

1. Prohibition of blemished sacrifices, in general terms, as though it were a summary of Lev. 22.17 ff. In the latter the various kinds of blemish are enumerated.

- 2 If there be found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that doeth that which is evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing His covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have commanded not; and it be told thee, and thou hear it, then shalt thou inquire diligently, and, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel; then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, who have done this evil thing, unto thy gates, even the man or the woman; and thou shalt stone them with stones, that they die. At the mouth of two

## 2-7. IDOLATRY IS TO BE PUNISHED BY STONING.

This section, too, seems to be out of place here: it is more closely related to chapter 13 dealing with worship of other gods.

2. *in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates*] A case of anacoluthon (GKC., § 167b).

*in transgressing His covenant*] בריח here has reference to the ten commandments, comp. 4.13 and elsewhere. By serving other gods the Israelite violates the most important and fundamental of the ten commandments.

3. *or the sun, etc.*] Comp. 4.19.

*which I have commanded not*] i. e. not to serve them (Septuagint, Talmud Meg. 9b). Moses uses the first person, as in 7.4 and elsewhere in these discourses.

4. *then shalt thou inquire, etc.*] Exactly as in 13.15.

*abomination*] This is the customary epithet for idolatry.

5. *bring forth, etc.*] For the stoning was done outside the camp or city, comp. Lev. 24.14 and Num. 15.36.

*even the man or the woman*] The repetition is for emphasis. The Septuagint omits this phrase.

*stone with stones*] So 13.11. Stoning was the ordinary mode of capital punishment prescribed by Hebrew law (Lev. 20.2). It was an

witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him <sup>7</sup> to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, <sup>8</sup> between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, even matters of controversy

ancient custom, having been in vogue before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt (Ex. 8.22). It was not confined to the Hebrews alone, as it is found also among other nations in the ancient Orient (Alfred Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur*<sup>2</sup>, p. 53).

6. The accused must not be condemned and put to death on the testimony of a single witness: either two or three witnesses are required for conviction. According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, IV. 8.15), women and children were excluded from giving testimony in court.

7. *The hand of the witnesses, etc.*] It is the duty of the witnesses to kill the idolater (Sifre), but if he is not killed by the witnesses all the people should kill him; similarly 13.10.

*put away the evil from the midst of thee*] So 13.6, etc.

### 8-13. JUDGES OF FINAL APPEAL.

8. *too hard for thee*] Literally "too wonderful for thee," i. e. above thy power to decide.

*between blood and blood*] i. e. whether a homicide has been committed willfully or unpremeditatedly (RSbM).

*between plea and plea*] The reference is to matters of money and property (Ibn Ezra, RMbN, RSbM), whether a man charged with theft or embezzlement is actually guilty.

*between stroke and stroke*] In cases of bodily injury (Ibn Ezra, RMbN), to determine the extent of the injury and the kind of penalty.

*matters of controversy*] Summarizes all the preceding doubtful cases. It is of interest to note that in the judicial system established by king Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 19.5 ff.), which apparently is based on the Deuteronomic system, this passage takes a different form: "between

- within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose.
- 9 And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days; and thou shalt inquire; and they shall declare unto thee the sentence of
- 10 judgment. And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the sentence, which they shall declare unto thee from that place which the LORD shall choose; and thou shalt observe
- 11 to do according to all that they shall teach thee. According to the law which they shall teach thee, and according

blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances." Evidently the latter prescription is more comprehensive, including also cases of a religious and ritual nature.

*then shalt thou arise, etc.*] Presumably this is addressed to the local judges who in case of doubt and indecision are to refer the case to the supreme judicial tribunal at the central sanctuary.

*get thee up*] The term for ascension is used because the sanctuary was generally situated on an elevation.

9. *the priests the Levites*] i. e. the Levitical priests; see on 10.8.

*the judge*] Collective for judges, comp. 19.17 and II Chron. 19.8. Evidently the supreme judicial tribunal at the central sanctuary consisted of priests and laymen (Sifre). Another view is that by "judge" is meant the king (Yeb. 49b), or the high priest (Sotah 45a), who presided over the tribunal.

*and thou shalt inquire*] Namely of the priests, concerning the case. The Samaritan and the Septuagint read "and they shall inquire," with reference to the priests.

*the sentence of judgment*] So also II Chron. 19.6.

10. *according to the tenor of the sentence*] Literally "in consonance with the sentence" (of judgment), pronounced by the supreme tribunal; comp. the preceding verse.

*observe to do*] See on 5.1.

11. *the law*] Torah is a broad term, comprising any instruction, legal or otherwise, imparted by a competent authority; more frequently it refers to instructions given by the priests to the laity in matters of ceremonial observance. Here it evidently denotes the

to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not turn aside from the sentence which they shall declare unto thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that doeth presumptuously, in not hearkening <sup>12</sup> unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die; and thou shalt exterminate the evil from Israel. And all <sup>13</sup> the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

judicial decision of the higher court on the matter under litigation, and is probably equivalent to the following "judgment."

*the judgment]* משפט has particular reference to decisions on points of secular law.

*turn aside, etc.]* See on 2.27.

**12. presumptuously]** See on 1.43.

*unto the priest . . . or unto the judge]* From this it may be inferred that the decision was rendered sometimes by an ecclesiastical and sometimes by a civil chief judge.

*shall die]* Disobedience of the decision of the supreme court is punishable by death.

*exterminate, etc.]* As above, v. 7 and 13.6.

**13. And all the people, etc.]** Similarly 13.12.

#### 14-20. ON CHOOSING A KING.

After the institution of judges and a supreme court comes the provision for the election of a king or supreme ruler, who also functioned as a supreme judge. His qualifications are quite rigid: he must be a native Israelite, he must not imitate the worldliness and extravagance of foreign rulers and despots, and, above all, he must adhere strictly to the laws and statutes of the Torah. This injunction is theocratic in nature and is peculiar to Deuteronomy. It is not in the form of a binding law, but optional in character and left to the wishes of the people. Hence for a long period after the conquest of Canaan there was no king in Israel. The monarchy was not established until the days of Samuel, when Saul was chosen first king of the Hebrews (I Sam. 8.4. ff.).



- 14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy  
 God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell  
 therein; and shalt say: 'I will set a king over me, like all  
 15 the nations that are round about me'; thou shalt in any

It is claimed by critics of the Pentateuch that the Deuteronomic law concerning the election of a king is contradicted by the account in I Sam., *ibid.*, of the establishment of the monarchy in Israel, for there the proposal of the people to appoint a king is viewed by Samuel as a grave offence against God and as something fraught with danger for their future. "This narrative, now, shows no indications of the law of Deuteronomy having been known in fact, either to Samuel, or to the people who demanded of him a king: had such been the case, it is incredible either that Samuel should have resisted the application of the people as he is represented as doing, or—if *per impossibile* he did this—that the people should not have appealed to the law, as a sufficient justification of their request" (Driver). The corollary of this argument is that the Deuteronomic law is of a much later date than the account of I Samuel and represents a departure from the earlier opposition to a monarchy. However, in contrast to this radical view, conservative commentators maintain that Samuel really did not condemn the people's request for a king, as such, but rather the temper in which this request was made. The Israelites evidently exhibited lack of confidence in God, since they deemed it necessary to have a king besides God, after Samuel had grown old. They also proved their idolatrous propensities by citing as their motive the fact that all the other nations had kings ruling them. That the principle of a monarchy in itself was not disapproved by God may be seen from His promises to the patriarchs that kings will come forth from them (Gen. 17.6, 16; 35.11; 49.10). Moreover, if the law of Deuteronomy were later than the account in I Samuel it would certainly have reflected some of the special features of the latter (8.11-17).

14. *When thou art come, etc.*] So 26.1. The institution of a king is intended for the future, when the Israelites will have been settled in the promised land.

*I will set a king, etc.*] Comp. I Sam. 8.5, where all the elders of Israel address Samuel saying: "now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

15. The king is to be one chosen by God and a native Israelite.

wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother. Only he shall not multiply horses 16 to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you: 'Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.' Neither shall he multiply wives to him- 17 self, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly

*whom the Lord thy God shall choose]* Namely through a prophet, as in the case of Saul (I Sam. 10.24) and David (I Sam. 16.12 f.).

*a foreigner]* Among Israel's neighbors there were examples of foreigners rising to despotic power, as in Edom (Gen. 36.31 ff.) and in Moab (Num. 22.5). Among the Israelites themselves no such case is known, except more than a millennium later, when Herod the Idumean usurped the Judean throne and became king of the Jews, illustrating by his despotism the dire consequences of breaking this law. It is related in the Mishna (Sotah 7.8) that while reading this law of Deuteronomy, Agrippa I of the Herodian dynasty burst into tears as he recalled his Edomite origin.

16. *he shall not multiply horses]* i. e. more than is necessary for his chariots and horsemen (Sifre). Horses, which were a sign of opulence, appeared in Babylonia about 2000 B. C. E., thence they were imported into Egypt by the invading Hyksos, and from Egypt they reached Canaan about 1600 B. C. E. King Solomon is said to have possessed 1400 horses, which he purchased in Egypt (I Kings 10.26 ff.). The stables for these horses have been uncovered recently at Megiddo (comp. J. Garrow Duncan, *Digging Up Biblical History*, I, 248 f.).

*to return to Egypt, etc.]* Since the horses came from Egypt (I Kings 10.28). Yer. Sanh., end, amplifies this statement as follows: You must not return to Egypt for permanent settlement, but you may return thither for commerce.

*the Lord hath said, etc.]* Not in the identical words, but to the same purport, comp. Ex. 13.17 and 14.13.

17. *wives]* Not necessarily foreign wives, as in the case of Solomon (I Kings 11.1 ff.), for even Israelite women might turn his heart away from God.

18 multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which  
 19 is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words  
 20 of this law and these statutes, to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel.

18. *a copy*] מִסְכָּה is literally a "duplicate."

*this law*] i. e. the Deuteronomic Law, or the laws, statutes, and ordinances expounded in the Book of Deuteronomy. The orthodox view is that the reference is to the entire Pentateuch (Hoffmann).

*book*] סֵפֶר is a piece of writing, brief or long (inscription, letter, document, book), inscribed on various material (stone, wood, metal, leather, parchment, papyrus). The material employed for Temple and synagogue scrolls in ancient times was generally leather made of the skins of wild animals, parchment being used but seldom (Blau, *Das alt-hebräische Buchwesen*, pp. 23 ff.).

*out of that which is before the priests*] The transcript is to be made from a model codex or standard text which was in the custody of the Levitical priests at the central sanctuary. Comp. I Sam. 10.25, where the prophet Samuel is said to have written the "manner of the kingdom" in a book and laid it up before the Lord.

19. *it shall be with him*] viz. for constant perusal and reference, as long as he lives.

20. In addition to fearing God and observing His commandments the king must also be meek and humble before his brethren, i. e. his subjects. The rabbinic interpretation is that the king should not think that some commandments are intended only for the common people and not for the supreme ruler; rather should he fulfill every prescription of the Law like everybody else (Hoffmann ad loc.).

*turn not aside, etc.*] Comp. above v. 11 and 5.29.

The priests the Levites, even all the tribe of Levi, shall **18** have no portion nor inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and His inheritance. And they shall have no inheritance among their brethren; **2** the LORD is their inheritance, as He hath spoken unto them.

And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from **3** them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep, that

## CHAPTER 18.

### LAWS CONCERNING PRIESTS AND PROPHETS.

#### 1-8. SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

Since the priests and Levites were consecrated to the service of God and the instruction of the people, and, moreover, were without any inheritance, they had to depend entirely upon gifts for their subsistence. The following verses enumerate some of these gifts, others are mentioned in Lev. 7.31 ff.; Num. 18.18, etc., among them being the showbread, unleavened bread, and money.

1. *The priests the Levites*] A fixed term in Deuteronomy to designate the priests of the tribe of Levi, as distinguished from the Aaronide priests, comp. 17.9, 18; 24.8; 27.9; sometimes varied to "the priests the sons of Levi," as in 21.5; 31.9, and elsewhere.

*all the tribe of Levi*] Including those that are not officiating priests.

*no portion nor inheritance*] Portion in the booty and inheritance in the land (Sifre, Rashi). Similarly 10.9; 12.12; 14.27, 29, and elsewhere.

*the offerings of the Lord made by fire*] i. e. all the fire offerings of which the priests received portions for their own use. This excludes the holocaust (חֹלֶקֶת).

*His inheritance*] Refers to all other sacred dues, as, for instance, first-fruits, tithes, etc., comp. below v. 4.

2. A repetition of the foregoing verse, for emphasis.

*the Lord is their inheritance*] So 10.9, likewise with reference to the Levites. In Num. 18.20 this statement is made of the Aaronides alone.

3-4. A detailed statement concerning the portions of the offerings that belong to the priests and the Levites.

3. *the priests' due, etc.*] Comp. I Sam. 2.13, where the wording is the same as here.

they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two  
 4 cheeks, and the maw. The first-fruits of thy corn, of thy  
 wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy  
 5 sheep, shalt thou give him. For the LORD thy God hath  
 chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in  
 the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all  
 Israel, where he sojourneth, and come with all the desire of

*the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw]* In Lev. 7.31 ff. (comp. also Num. 18.18) the priests' dues are the breast and the right thigh. To harmonize these statements the Mishna (Hul. 10.1) maintains that the reference in Deuteronomy is not to sacrifices, but to animals slaughtered at home for domestic use, in accordance with 12.15 (similarly Philo and Josephus). Another view is to the effect that the dues here prescribed are not in place of, but in addition to the dues specified in Leviticus (Schultz and others).

4. *The first-fruits of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil]* Similarly in Num. 18.12, where they are called "heave-offerings." Accordingly, ראשית is the first-fruits of prepared products, and is to be distinguished from בכורים (Ex. 23.19; 34.26), which is the first-fruits of raw products of the soil.

*the first of the fleece of thy sheep]* Not mentioned in the preceding books of the Pentateuch, for in the wilderness only peace-offerings were eaten, to which the law of the first of the fleece did not apply (Hul. 135a). The purpose of this gift was to provide the priests and Levites with the necessary clothes.

5. *hath chosen him]* Similarly 21.5.

*out of all thy tribes]* Comp. 12.5.

*to stand to minister]* So 10.8.

*him and his sons for ever]* Probably refers to Aaron and the Aaronides and implies hereditary priesthood.

6. *a Levite]* i. e. any member of the tribe of Levi. Sifre construes it as "the priest," with reference to v. 3.

*from any, etc.]* i. e. from any one of the cities of Israel.

*where he sojourneth]* viz. temporarily, since he has no inheritance and consequently no permanent home.

his soul unto the place which the LORD shall choose; then <sup>7</sup> he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, who stand there before the LORD. They shall have like portions to eat, beside that <sup>8</sup> which is his due according to the fathers' houses.

7. *then he shall minister*] This is the apodosis following the protasis of the preceding verse. The newly arrived Levite is to be on an equal footing with the Levites who had been serving at the sanctuary for a long time.

8. *beside that which is his due according to the fathers' houses*] A cryptic phrase, perhaps an abbreviated legal formula, which, according to Ibn Ezra, signifies "apart from what he has realized by selling his paternal estate." Dillmann suggests another interpretation: "besides what he has realized by selling the dues that had fallen to him from certain families to whom he ministered at home." Some exegetes (Steuernagel, Ehrlich) advance a conjectural emendation: "except those who are idolatrous priests (reading מַכְמְרֵי instead of מַמְכְּרֵי) and necromancers (reading הַאֲבֹת for הַאֲבֹת)", which is quite ingenious but hardly deserving of acceptance.

## 9-22. PROPHETS VERSUS DIVINERS AND MAGICIANS.

Magic in its various forms and manifestations (augury, divination, soothsaying, enchantment, etc.) was a potent force in the ancient Orient, tantamount to religion. It occupied a dominant position in Egypt and Babylonia, where many magic hymns have come to light in recent years; but also the adjacent countries were greatly influenced by it and its concomitant evils. The Israelites must have come under its influence in Egypt, as is evident from the story of the exodus, and apparently they could not divest themselves of it entirely after their settlement in Canaan, which had its own share of magic beliefs and practices. Prophecy, or prediction of future events through divine inspiration, was encouraged in Israel as a proper and effective foil to magical divination and demoniac soothsaying. Hence the bitter and internecine struggle between the true prophets, inspired by God, and the false prophets, operating with all the aids and tricks of magic.

- 9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy  
 God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abomi-  
 10 nations of those nations. There shall not be found among  
 you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass  
 through the fire, one that useth divination, a soothsayer, or

9. *When thou art come, etc.*] Similarly 17.14.  
*the abominations*] See on 7.25.

10. *that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire*] An allusion to the abominable Molech worship practiced by the Canaanites on special occasions (see on 12.31, and comp. W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 372 ff. and 630 ff., as well as Stanley A. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology*, pp. 29 and 137) and condemned also in Lev. 18.21 and 20.2 ff., where it is made punishable by death. In this rite the children were not only made to pass between two pyres (Rashi), but were actually consumed by the fire (RMBN), as evidenced from Jer. 7.31 and 19.5. Jeremiah refers to "the valley of the son of Hinnom" as the place where this abominable rite was chiefly practiced, hence the term *הַיָּהוֹם* for "hell" in later Hebrew.

*one that useth divination*] The Hebrew term *סוֹפֵר* denotes in Arabic "to obtain an oracle" from a divinity by some method of drawing lots. This kind of divination seems to have been practiced among the ancient Arabs (Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, pp. 126 ff.) and the Babylonians (Ezek. 21.26 f.; comp. Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, p. 238, n. 2). As in the Bible, it is prohibited also in the Koran (5.4). However, the term mentioned above seems to have a wider application in Hebrew than in Arabic, for it stands in the Bible for divination in general and is often contrasted with prophecy (comp. Isa. 3.2, etc.). In many passages of the Prophets it is used disparagingly of the oracles pronounced by the false prophets.

*soothsayer*] *סוֹפֵר*, so also below v. 14, Lev. 19.26, etc. The exact connotation of the word is not quite certain. A talmudic interpretation is as follows: there are those who observe periods and hours, saying to-day it is fit to go out, to-morrow it is appropriate to buy (Tosefta Shab. 7.14; Sanh. 65b). It was understood by Saadya to have reference to astrology. Another derivation is from *ענן* "cloud," rendering it "cloud-gazer" (Ibn Ezra and others). Some think it is onomatopoeic,

an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or one that 11  
consulteth a ghost or a familiar spirit, or a necromancer.

imitating the humming or crooning of the soothsayer (W. R. Smith and others).

*enchanter*] Prohibited also in Lev. 19.26. The exact kind of divination of a מַכְשֵׁף is not known. In Gen. 44.5 it seems to be used of Egyptian hydromancy. Jewish tradition takes it to refer to augury or observation of omens (Sifre). As to the etymology of the word, it is generally derived from the stem נחש=חש "hiss, whisper," with reference to the manner of delivery of the message by the soothsayer (Gesenius and others). Another view is that the word is a denominative from נחש "serpent," for the power of divination was obtained by the aid of serpents (Bochart).

*sorcerer*] מַכְשֵׁף is of doubtful origin. By comparison with a similar Arabic root, W. R. Smith suggested that the substantive כַּשְׂפִּים (Mic. 5.11) may have denoted primarily "herbs or other drugs shredded into a magic brew," for the purpose of producing certain magical effects. This is borne out by the rendering of the Septuagint "magical potions."

11. *a charmer*] Literally "one who weaves spells, a spell-binder," or perhaps one who ties magic knots (comp. Campbell Thompson, *Semitic Magic*, pp. 162 ff.). Tradition takes it to denote "a serpent charmer" (Sifre, Rashi), with reference to Ps. 58.6.

*one that consulteth a ghost or a familiar spirit*] Similarly Lev. 19.31; 20.6, 27, etc. אוֹב is the spirit of a dead person which was conjured up for the purpose of obtaining information concerning the future (comp. Saul's experience at En-dor in I Sam., ch. 28). This spirit was supposed to speak in a chirping, twittering voice (Isa. 8.19; 29.4) through the arm-pit of the conjurer (Sifre); hence the rendering of the Septuagint "ventriloquist". יִדְּעִי, meaning "knower" or "acquaintance" (W. R. Smith), is probably a familiar spirit which was supposed to instruct and advise a particular person.

*a necromancer*] Literally "one that inquireth of the dead," hence a general term for a consulter of ghosts and familiar spirits, including both אוֹב and יִדְּעִי, as borne out by Isa. 8.19. According to Sifre and Rashi, this term refers to other species of necromancy, such as consulting skeletons, passing the night in tombs, etc.



- 12 For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto the LORD; and because of these abominations the LORD thy  
 13 God is driving them out from before thee. Thou shalt be  
 14 whole-hearted with the LORD thy God. For these nations, that thou art to dispossess, hearken unto soothsayers, and unto diviners; but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath  
 15 not suffered thee so to do. A prophet will the LORD thy God raise up unto thee, from the midst of thee, of thy

12. *abomination*] See on 7.25.

*is driving them out*] See on 9.5.

13. *whole-hearted*] תמים means "perfect" in a moral sense, comp. Gen. 17.1.

*with*] i. e. in dealing with. The implication is: "Trust in God and do not seek the assistance of magic forces and demoniacal powers."

14. *these nations*] Namely the Canaanites, who were addicted to magic practices, to divination and soothsaying.

*hath not suffered thee so to do*] viz. to consult diviners and soothsayers, but instead He gave you inspired prophets and the Urim and Thummim through which you can learn the will of God in critical and doubtful cases (Rashi).

15. *A prophet*] i. e. one who announces the words of God, an authoritative and infallible teacher of God's will. The *nabi* or prophet was a person qualified by God to be His spokesman to men, hence he is contrasted very emphatically with the soothsayer who was a representative of demoniac spirits. In earlier years the *nabi* was also known as "seer" (חֹזֵן in I Sam. 9.9, חֹזֵן in Isa. 30.10), i. e. prognosticator of future events. Our passage, according to Ibn Ezra, has particular reference to Joshua, the successor of Moses. Others think the allusion is not to one prophet, but to a succession of prophets, arising whenever the need arises for ascertaining the will of God.

*from the midst of thee, of thy brethren*] A tautologous expression, for which the Samaritan and the Septuagint have "from the midst of thy brethren," as below in v. 18. The prophets are to be of Israelite, not of foreign origin, as is often the case among other nations (comp. Num. 22.5 f.; Isa. 2.6).

brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; accord- 16  
 ing to all that thou didst desire of the LORD thy God in  
 Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying: 'Let me not  
 hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me  
 see this great fire any more, that I die not.' And the LORD 17  
 said unto me: 'They have well said that which they have  
 spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their 18  
 brethren, like unto thee; and I will put My words in his  
 mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall com-  
 mand him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will 19  
 not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My  
 name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, that shall 20  
 speak a word presumptuously in My name, which I have  
 not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the

*like unto me*] Not equal to me in rank, but from your midst and of  
 your brethren like me (Rashi), or a true prophet like me, not a diviner  
 or soothsayer (Ibn Ezra).

16. *according to all, etc.*] Comp. 5.20 ff.

*the day of the assembly*] Comp. 9.10; 10.4.

17. *They have well said, etc.*] Exactly as in 5.25.

18. *I will raise them up, etc.*] God's reply in 5.28 is worded dif-  
 ferently and the charge is confined to Moses himself; here it is extended  
 to include Moses' successors.

*I will put My words in his mouth*] For the idiom comp. Jer. 1.9 and  
 5.14.

*and he shall speak, etc.*] Similarly Ex. 7.2; Jer. 1.7, 17.

19. *he*] i. e. the prophet.

*I will require it of him*] i. e. I will exact punishment of the man who  
 disobeys the prophet's message. The penalty, according to Jewish  
 tradition, is death by the hand of God (Sifre).

20. *the prophet, etc.*] The reference here is to false prophets, of  
 whom two classes are distinguished: those who prophesied falsely in  
 the name of God, and those who prophesied in the name of other gods.  
 Their penalty was death by asphyxiation.

21 name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.' And if thou say in thy heart: 'How shall we know the word which  
22 the LORD hath not spoken?' When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.

19 When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations, whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou dost succeed  
2 them, and dwell in their cities, and in their houses; thou

21. *if thou say, etc.*] Similarly 7.17.

22. *if the thing follow not, etc.*] The falseness of the prophet is proved by the non-fulfillment of his prophecy. This, of course, does not include cases of non-fulfillment of a true prophecy due to the repentance of the people after the prophecy was uttered, as in the case of Jonah's prophecy over Nineveh. This criterion is slightly modified in Jer. 28.9: "The prophet that prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him."

*thou shalt not be afraid of him*] Even if he is capable of performing miracles, do not hesitate to punish him according to the law.

## CHAPTER 19.

### CRIMINAL LAWS.

#### 1-13. CITIES OF REFUGE.

An elaboration of the law contained in Ex. 21.12-14, of which Num. 35.9-34 is another expansion. Comp. 4.41-43, where three Transjordanic cities of refuge are said to have been appointed by Moses. The cities of refuge under discussion here were to be established west of the Jordan, which was accomplished by Joshua (chapter 20).

1. *cut off, etc.*] Exactly as in 12.29.

*in their cities, and in their houses*] A variant from "in their land" of 12.29, which is interpreted in Jewish sources to mean that the Israel-

shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the borders <sup>3</sup> of thy land, which the LORD thy God causeth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every manslayer may flee thither. And this is the case of the manslayer, that shall <sup>4</sup> flee thither and live: whoso killeth his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in time past; as when a man goeth <sup>5</sup> into the forest with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon

ites were permitted to live in the houses of the Canaanites although they had been polluted by idolatry.

2. *three cities*] Comp. Josh. 20.7, and see the comment on 4.41.

3. *prepare thee the way*] i. e. make a straight and level road, easily accessible to the homicide (Sifre), or indicate the proper road to him through signs at cross-roads (Rashi).

*into three parts*] So that a city of refuge could be established in each part, in order to facilitate the homicide's escape.

4. *unawares*] Literally "without knowledge," so 4.42; elsewhere בְּטָעָה "through error," i. e. inadvertently.

*hated him not*] So 4.42; similarly Num. 35.23.

5. *as when a man, etc.*] An illustration of accidental homicide.

*to hew wood*] Apparently associating חָצַב with חָצַב; but the former stem denotes in Arabic "collect firewood," and in this sense it appears also in Ezek. 39.10.

*his hand fetcheth a stroke*] Literally "his hand is driven or impelled" by the axe.

*the head slippeth from the helve*] More exactly "the iron slippeth from the wood," which is interpreted in two ways: 1) the iron head slips from the wooden handle and injures the man in its course, as in our version, in which case the last *וְיָ* is construed in a different sense from that of the former (Targum Onkelos); 2) the iron head cuts out a piece of the wood in splitting it, and this splinter hurtles and hits the man (Mishna Mak., 2.1; RSbM). The former interpretation is more plausible and correct grammatically.

his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of these  
6 cities and live; lest the avenger of blood pursue the man-  
slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because  
the way is long, and smite him mortally; whereas he was  
not deserving of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in

*and live]* According to Josh. 20.4, he is "to stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city," after which he is received as resident of that city.

6. *the avenger of blood]* גֹּאֵל הַדָּם (so also Num. 35.19 ff.; Josh. 20.3, 5, 9) means literally 'the redeemer of blood' which has been shed, hence avenger. The right of avenging the blood of a murdered person was naturally vested in his nearest kinsman. The custom of blood-revenge is universal, and is especially characteristic of society in a primitive stage of development. It rests on the basic principles of the sacredness of human life and the solidarity of the tribe or clan in primitive times. As soon as an organized state is formed to protect the rights of communities and individuals, blood-revenge falls into desuetude. The Semitic peoples have practiced this custom from times immemorial, and we still find it in full force among the Arabs of the desert (W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 22 ff.; C. M. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, II, 424; Richard F. Burton, *Pilgrimage to Madinah and Meccah*, I, 235.).

*the manslayer]* Strictly speaking, the murdered man's next of kin or *goel* was bound by tribal custom to avenge his blood by compassing the death not merely of the murderer himself, but of all his family, since the latter was so closely knit together that the murderer's guilt was shared by everyone belonging to it. This principle, which was prevalent among the Arabs, may be traced in Josh. 7.24 and II Kings 9.26.

*while his heart is hot]* Consequently he is unable to judge whether the homicide was willful or accidental.

*the way is long]* i. e. the road to the central sanctuary may be distant, comp. 14.24.

*smite him mortally]* Literally "smite him as regards the soul" (or the life).

*he was not deserving of death]* Literally "he had no case of death," or "death was not his due," i. e. his offense was not one deserving capital punishment.

time past. Wherefore I command thee, saying: 'Thou shalt 7  
 separate three cities for thee.' And if the LORD thy God 8  
 enlarge thy border, as He hath sworn unto thy fathers,  
 and give thee all the land which He promised to give unto  
 thy fathers—if thou shalt keep all this commandment to 9  
 do it, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD  
 thy God, and to walk ever in His ways—then shalt thou  
 add three cities more for thee, beside these three; that 10  
 innocent blood be not shed in the midst of thy land, which  
 the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so  
 blood be upon thee.

But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for 11  
 him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that  
 he die; and he flee into one of these cities; then the elders of 12

8. *enlarge thy border, etc.*] Similarly 12.20. This is probably an allusion to the ideal boundaries of Israel set forth in 1.7 and 11.23 f.

9. *if thou shalt keep, etc.*] The expansion of Israel's territory is conditioned by obedience to God and keeping all His commandments.

*three cities more*] According to Jewish tradition, these additional cities of refuge are intended for the distant and indefinite future (Sifre).

10. *innocent blood*] So 21.8 and 27.25, comp. also below v. 13.

*blood be upon thee*] The guilt of blood will rest upon all Israel, if no attempt is made to prevent the shedding of innocent blood through the appointment of cities of refuge. On this entire problem, comp. A. P. Bissell, *The Law of Asylum in Israel*, Leipzig, 1884.

11. *But if any man hate his neighbour, etc.*] A warning against allowing the privilege of asylum to a willful murderer who premeditates the slaying of his hated neighbor. Similarly Ex. 21.14. For different cases of intentional homicide, comp. Num. 35.16 ff.

12. *the elders of his city*] Similarly 21.2 ff.; 22.15 ff.; 25.7 ff.; comp. on 5.20. The elders, mentioned frequently in the Bible, were the representatives of their respective communities and exercised religious and judicial functions, particularly in connection with capital charges and cases affecting the rights of the family. In the parallel passage Num.

- his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the blood of the innocent from Israel, that it may go well with thee.
- 14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou

35.12, 24 the congregation takes the place of the elders, but according to the Talmud (Sanh. 2a) the two terms are synonymous, both referring to the local court of 23 elders or representatives of the community.

*and deliver him, etc.]* This shows that the vendetta or blood feud of primitive society, which is still prevalent in eastern countries, particularly among the Arabs, was not disapproved in ancient Israel.

13. *Thine eye shall not pity him]* Similarly 7.16 and 13.9.

*put away]* More correctly "exterminate, wipe out completely."

*the blood of the innocent]* Innocent blood, as long as it remains un-avenged, is a stain upon the land (Num. 35.33) and cries from the ground (Gen. 4.10); it is wiped out only through the death of the murderer. A ransom is permitted only in the case of a man killed by an animal (Ex. 21.30).

*go well with thee]* So 5.30.

#### 14. AGAINST THE REMOVAL OF LANDMARKS.

*Thou shalt not remove, etc.]* A similar injunction is found in 27.17, and elsewhere. Boundaries were considered sacred and inviolable among the Israelites, as among other tribes and nations (comp. Stanley A. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology*, p. 197). Among the oldest Babylonian monuments are found border-stones of fields with dedications to gods and violent curses upon everyone who dares to remove them (Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws*, pp. 191 f.). The same attitude to landmarks is taken also by the Arabs (C. M. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I, 163; Musil, *Ethnographischer Bericht*, p. 87). Boundary-stones have been discovered by R. A. S. Macalister at Gezer (*The Excavation of Gezer*, I, 37 ff.).

*which they of old time have set]* The objection made to this phrase that it could not have emanated from Moses is not quite cogent, for

shalt inherit, in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established. If an unrighteous witness rise up against any man to bear perverted witness against him; then both the men, between whom the con-

אִשְׁתָּיִם does not necessarily refer to Israel's ancestors: it may denote former people in general. This statement should be construed as a general prohibition intended for all time, that boundaries set by former people should not be removed by their successors.

#### 15-21. CONCERNING WITNESSES.

15. *One witness, etc.*] No person is to be condemned on the testimony of a single witness. In the same sense 17.6 and Num. 35.30.

*for any iniquity, or for any sin*] Sifre and Rashi interpret both חַטָּאת and עֲוֹנוֹת as "penalty" rather than "sin" (the former is found in this sense in Gen. 4.13; I Sam. 28.10; II Kings 7.9; the latter likewise in Zech. 14.19) and construe the former as capital punishment and the latter as a fine.

*at the mouth of*] i. e. on the testimony of.  
*be established*] viz. as to truth or falsity.

16. *an unrighteous witness*] Literally "a witness of violence," i. e. a false witness who through his testimony aims to do violence to someone, either to the accuser or the accused.

*perverted witness*] חֲסִידָה means generally "defection, apostasy" (comp. 13.6), but here it is equivalent to שָׁקֵר "falsehood" (comp. below v. 18), something that is opposed to fact (Sifre, Rashi). Most commentators take it to refer to the guilt imputed to the accused person (Ibn Ezra, etc.).

17. *both the men*] Modern commentators take this to refer to the unrighteous witness and the person whom he accuses. The Talmud (Sheb. 30a) construes it as a reference to the two witnesses required by law (comp. above v. 15), though admitting the possibility of an allusion to the two litigants, especially in view of the phrase "between whom the controversy is."



troversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests  
 18 and the judges that shall be in those days. And the judges  
 shall inquire diligently; and, behold, if the witness be a  
 false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;  
 19 then shall ye do unto him, as he had purposed to do unto  
 20 his brother; so shalt thou put away the evil from the  
 20 midst of thee. And those that remain shall hear, and fear,  
 and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the  
 21 midst of thee. And thine eye shall not pity: life for life,  
 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

*before the Lord, etc.*] i. e. before the supreme tribunal instituted at the central sanctuary and consisting of priests and laymen (comp. on 17.9).

18. *shall inquire diligently*] Comp. 13.15 and 17.4.

19. *as he had purposed to do*] i. e. intended to do, but had not yet done, hence, in capital cases, if the accused person was still alive. Hence the Pharisees decreed that the false witness is to be killed only if the person whom he accused has not yet been executed: if he already suffered the penalty of death, the witness is not to be killed (Mak. 5b). The chief reason for this Pharisaic decree was undoubtedly the desire to maintain the dignity and infallibility of the supreme court that passed judgment upon the accused person in the first instance. The Sadducees, on the other hand, maintained that the false witness is to be killed only in case the accused person has already been executed, not otherwise.

*put away the evil, etc.*] Comp. on 13.6.

20. *those that remain, etc.*] Similarly 13.12.

21. *shall not pity*] Namely the false witness.

*life for life, etc.*] The *lex talionis* or law of retaliation, found also in Ex. 21.23 ff. and Lev. 24.18 ff., was well-nigh universal in the ancient Orient, as may be seen from the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi and other Oriental codes. Among the Hebrews this law was later modified to denote monetary compensation (B. K. 84a, and elsewhere). Our text employs the  $\pi$  *pretii* (GKC., § 119 p) instead of  $\pi\pi\pi$  used in the parallel passages.

When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, **20**  
and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than  
thou, thou shalt not be afraid of them; for the LORD thy  
God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of  
Egypt. And it shall be, when ye draw nigh unto the **2**

## CHAPTER 20.

### LAWS CONCERNING WAR.

The ancient Hebrews regarded war as holy, ordained and managed by God. Hence before engaging in aggressive war, they consulted God's will in the matter (Judg. 20.23 ff.; I Sam. 14.37; 23.2; I Kings 22.6), or, when war was unavoidable, they invoked God's help by prayer and sometimes by sacrifice (I Sam. 7.8 f.; 13.12; II Chron. 20.6 ff.), offering a burnt-offering, which was the most solemn piaculum. The Hebrew phrase for opening war is "to consecrate war," and warriors are consecrated persons, subject to special taboos (Isa. 13.3; Jer. 6.4; 51.28; Joel 4.9; Mic. 3.5). God is the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel (I Sam. 17.45, etc), and Israel's wars are His wars (Ex. 17.16; Num. 21.14; Judg. 5.23; I Sam. 25.28). With the holy ark He moves into camp against Israel's enemies (I Sam. 4.6). Thus war to the Israelites, as to all other Semitic tribes and nations, was a religious act.

### 1-9. WAR AND EXEMPTION FROM MILITARY SERVICE.

**1. to battle]** According to Jewish tradition, the reference is to optional, not compulsory, wars (Sifre).

*horses and chariots]* The Hebrew singular is used collectively (GKC., § 123a). Horses and chariots were the vehicles of the Egyptians and Assyrians and were awe-inspiring to the Hebrews (comp. Judg. 1.19; 4.3).

*and a people]* Note the asyndetic construction of עם.

*who brought thee up, etc.]* He helped you in a great crisis in the past, hence He is also capable of helping you in any time of distress, comp. 7.17 ff.

**2. when ye draw nigh]** On the Hebrew form פָּקַדְךָ comp. GKC. § 61d.

battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the  
 3 people, and shall say unto them: 'Hear, O Israel, ye draw  
 nigh this day unto battle against your enemies; let not  
 your heart faint; fear not, nor be alarmed, neither be ye  
 4 affrighted at them; for the LORD your God is He that  
 goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to  
 5 save you.' And the officers shall speak unto the people,  
 saying: 'What man is there that hath built a new house,  
 and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his  
 house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate  
 6 it. And what man is there that hath planted a vineyard,  
 and hath not used the fruit thereof? let him go and return

*the priest*] Who is attached to the army for the purpose of performing the necessary sacred rites. According to the Talmud (Sotah 42a), a special priest was appointed for this task and was known as "the priest anointed for the war," i. e. chaplain of the army.

3. *Hear, O Israel*] So 5.1.

*let not your heart faint*] viz. at the sight of the enemy and his formidable armaments; similarly Isa. 7.4; Jer. 51.46.

*nor be alarmed*] So as to flee precipitately (Ibn Ezra); comp. 16.3.

*neither be ye affrighted*] Similarly 1.29.

4. *He that goeth with you*] An allusion to the ark of the covenant, the seat of God, which accompanied the Israelites in battle (Rashi, following Mishna).

5. *the officers*] Comp. 1.15, where שָׂרֵי צֶהָרִים appear as subordinate military officials, who may have kept registers of the enlisted men and knew whether they were entitled to serve in the army or not.

*hath not dedicated it*] The dedication of a new house was a joyous occasion, which the owner could not afford to miss.

*return to his house*] For the anxiety for his newly built home was liable to make him faint-hearted and unfit for attack (Ibn Ezra).

6. *used the fruit thereof*] Literally "profaned it," i. e. made it common to be enjoyed by everybody; similarly 28.30 and Jer. 31.5. This is based on Lev. 19.23 ff., according to which the fruit of trees is forbidden the first three years after planting, but on the fourth year

unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit thereof. And what man is there that hath 7 betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.' And the officers shall speak further unto 8 the people, and they shall say: 'What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart melt as his heart.' And it 9 shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that captains of hosts shall be appointed at the head of the people.

When thou drawest nigh unto a city to fight against it, 10 then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make 11 thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be,

it may be eaten at the sanctuary or, if redeemed, at home, after which it loses its sanctity and is free for common use.

7. *betrothed a wife, etc.*] According to 24.5 a newly married person is exempt from military service for the space of one year.

8. The faint-hearted, too, are to return home lest they infect their brethren with the virus of fear.

*lest his brethren's heart melt*] The construction of the Hebrew phrase is striking and similar to that of 12.22 (נִפְחָל being Niph'al of נִפַּח and נִפְחָל indicating a subject, not, as usual, an object, comp. GKC., § 121ab).

9. *captains of hosts shall be appointed*] The Hebrew is an impersonal construction, the subject being indefinite, which is best rendered by the passive in English, comp. GKC., § 144d.

*at the head of the people*] Only after the number of active combatants is known definitely can the commanders of the army be appointed.

#### 10-18. AN ATTACK ON A HOSTILE CITY SHOULD BE MADE

, ONLY AFTER AN OFFER OF PEACE HAD BEEN REJECTED.

10. *to fight against it*] The reference is to an optional war (Sifre).

11. *open*] viz. its gates.

that all the people that are found therein shall become  
12 tributary unto thee, and shall serve thee. And if it will  
make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee,  
13 then thou shalt besiege it. And when the LORD thy God  
delivereth it into thy hand, thou shalt smite every male  
14 thereof with the edge of the sword; but the women, and  
the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city,  
even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take for a prey unto  
thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies,  
15 which the LORD thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt  
thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee,  
16 which are not of the cities of these nations. Howbeit of

*tributary]* The tribute consisted of forced labor or task-work imposed upon the inhabitants of the hostile city, comp. Josh. 16.10; I Kings 9.21.

12. *thou shalt besiege it]* When a city was besieged, the besiegers fortified their own camp against attack (Josephus, *Jewish War*, V. 2.3). In order to bring their weapons into play they cast up mounds in the direction of the city (II Sam. 20.15; Ezek. 4.2), high enough for archers and slingers to discharge their missiles into the city and for scaling-ladders to be thrown against its walls. Sometimes fire was applied to the gates of the city in order to burn them and afford ingress to the besiegers (Judg. 9.52).

13. *thou shalt smite, etc.]* This severity must be considered in the light of the cruel and barbarous warfare conducted by all nations in ancient times. Thus the Jewish mode of warfare was lenient compared to that of the Assyrians, for instance. Moreover, one must take into consideration the all-prevailing conception of war as a religious act in which the deity of the nation was deeply involved.

*every male]* Comp. on 16.16.

14. *the women, etc.]* i. e. the non-combatants, who for that reason may be spared.

*take for a prey]* Similarly 2.35.

15. *very far off from thee]* i. e. which lie outside of Canaan.

*these nations]* i. e. the Canaanite nations.

the cities of these peoples, that the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them: the 17 Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that they teach you not to do after all 18 their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, and so ye sin against the LORD your God.

When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making 19 war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees

16. *nothing that breatheth*] Literally "any breath" (of life). Though נשׁוּם is used once of animals (Gen. 7.22), it has reference generally to human beings, comp. particularly Josh. 11.14. Nothing that is alive was to be spared in Canaanite cities.

17. *utterly destroy them*] Comp. on 7.2.

*the Hittite, etc.*] On these six nations of Canaan comp. 7.1, where also a seventh nation, the unknown Gergashite, is recorded.

*commanded thee*] Namely in 7.2.

18. *their abominations*] Comp. 7.25; 12.31; 18.9, 12. The only reason for the utter destruction of the Canaanites was to preclude the possibility of their seducing the Israelites into idolatry.

#### 19-20. FRUIT-TREES SHOULD BE SPARED IN A SIEGE.

19. *thou shalt not destroy the trees*] As pointed out above on v. 13, warfare in the ancient East was ruthless, and it was common practice among warring nations to cut down the enemy's fruit-trees, so as to deprive him of an important food supply. Assyrian kings boast of this practice in their inscriptions (Rawlinson, *Ancient Monuments*<sup>3</sup>, I, 474 f.). In their invasion of Moab the Israelites, at the direction of the prophet Elisha, cut down every good tree (II Kings 3.19, 25). In Arabian warfare, too, it was customary to destroy the enemy's palm-groves (W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*<sup>2</sup>, p. 369).

thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee? Only the trees of which thou knowest that they are not trees for food, them thou mayest destroy and cut down, that thou mayest build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it fall.

*by wielding an axe against them*] The infinitive construct with the prefix ל expresses attendant circumstances (GKC., § 114 f). On the word נָחַל comp. 19.5.

*is the tree of the field man*] The Hebrew phrase, as vocalized by the Masorites, is not an interrogatory clause, but a positive statement: "man is the tree of the field," which is interpreted to mean "the life of man is the tree of the field" (Sifre, Ibn Ezra). But it is better to follow all the ancient versions and modern commentators in construing the phrase interrogatively: "is the tree of the field like man?" Man must be warred against because he is capable of becoming your enemy and doing you harm, not so a tree, which is harmless and offers sustenance to friend and foe alike. This plausible interpretation requires but a slight vocalic change, namely מִן־הָעֵץ instead of מִן־הָאֵץ.

20. *bulwarks*] Literally "siege-work" or "circumvallation."

*until it fall*] Better "until it is reduced," comp. 28.52. The Talmud (Shab. 19a) hence draws the corollary that a siege, once begun, may be continued also on the Sabbath, until it is completed.

## CHAPTER 21.

### 1-9. EXPIATION OF AN UNDETECTED MURDER.

The principle of this law, that an untraced murder must be ritually expiated by the entire community in whose midst the murder took place, recurs in the legislation of other Semitic and non-Semitic peoples. Thus the Code of Hammurabi (§ 24) provides that in a case like this the city or district governor shall pay one mina of silver to the relatives of the deceased. In similar cases in Arabia the people of the place had to swear that they were not the murderers (W. R. Smith, *Kinship and*

If one be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath smitten him; then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain. And it shall be, that the city which is nearest unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not

*Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 263; comp. also C. M. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I, 176). The expiation in the form of a sacramental sacrifice was for the purpose of blotting out the impiety and restoring the harmony between the community and its god. "In such a case it was inevitable that the sacrifice, performed as it was with circumstances closely akin to those of an execution, should come to be regarded as a surrogate for the death of the true culprit" (W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*,<sup>3</sup> p. 420).

1. *If one be found*] So 17.2 and 24.7.

*lying*] Literally "falling prostrate."

2. *thy elders and thy judges*] i.e. the elders and judges of the nearest cities (Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV. 8.16); according to the Talmud (Sotah 44b), three or five members of the supreme court.

*measure*] Namely from the place where the slain is lying (Sotah 45a) to the cities nearest to it.

3. *the city which is nearest*] Responsibility for the murder rests with the community nearest to the scene of the murder, and hence this community must perform the expiating rite.

*the elders*] Acting on behalf of the entire community, comp. 19.12.

*a heifer*] Opinions vary whether it is to be one or two years old (Sifre). In Gen. 15.9 a heifer three years old is offered by Abraham as a sacrifice.

*which hath not been wrought with*] The same provision is made about firstlings in 15.19 and about the red heifer in Num. 19.2. When not destined for sacred use, heifers were employed in work (Jud. 14.18; Jer. 50.11; Hos. 10.11).



- 4 drawn in the yoke. And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which may neither be plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there  
 5 in the valley. And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near — for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto Him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and according to their word shall every controversy and every  
 6 stroke be. And all the elders of that city, who are nearest unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer

4. *a rough valley*] נחל איתן (so also Am. 5.24) is so rendered by the ancient versions and medieval Jewish commentators, though apparently only by conjecture and without a supporting etymology. In modern times an Arabic root *watana* meaning "to be constant" has been advanced as an explanation of the adjective, and the phrase is rendered "a perennial or ever-flowing torrent" (Schultens and others).

*neither be plowed nor sown*] Hence a wild, uncultivated valley, appropriate for a solemn rite.

*break the heifer's neck*] The simple and unceremonial killing of the heifer (note the absence of the priests, who make their appearance only in the following verse) shows that this is not a ritual sacrifice, more particularly a sin-offering, but that the heifer is to be considered a substitute for the unknown murderer, whose penalty it bears.

*in the valley*] So that the blood of the heifer may be carried away by the stream and leave no trace behind. Another view is that a rough valley is chosen so that the blood may leave an indelible trace on the ground to commemorate the foul act (Luzzatto).

5. *the priests the sons of Levi*] So also 31.9, instead of the customary "the priests the Levites." Very likely these are the local priests, not the priests from the central sanctuary.

*for them, etc.*] Similarly 10.8; 18.5.

*according to their word, etc.*] Comp. 17.8 ff. The priests appear here not as active participants in the ceremony, but simply as important personages and high dignitaries who lend solemnity to the occasion and who see to it that the ceremony is carried out by the elders according to prescription.

6. *shall wash their hands*] This is a symbolic act expressing their

whose neck was broken in the valley. And they shall 7  
 speak and say: 'Our hands have not shed this blood, neither  
 have our eyes seen it. Forgive, O LORD, Thy people Israel, 8  
 whom Thou hast redeemed, and suffer not innocent blood  
 to remain in the midst of Thy people Israel.' And the  
 blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the 9  
 innocent blood from the midst of thee, when thou shalt  
 do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD.

innocence and the innocence of their city (comp. Ps. 26.6; 73.13) and indicating the guilt of the heifer which represents the murderer.

7. *shed*] Reading שפכו instead of the Ketib שפכה (similarly Ps. 73.2, etc.). However, the Ketib may be explained as a fem. sing. used collectively, or as an archaic plural used with fem. nouns, as in Aramaic and Ethiopic (GKC., § 145k).

8. *Forgive*] כפר is derived either from an Arabic root meaning "to cover," not in a literal but in a moral sense, namely with the collateral idea of either conciliating an offended person, or screening an offence or an offender; or from a Syriac stem denoting "wash away, rub off," hence obliterate a sin, by making propitiation or appeasing God's anger through a sacrifice. Comp. Driver's Additional Note on this word at the end of his Commentary (pp. 425 f.).

*redeemed*] viz. out of Egypt. The sense is: just as Thou hast shown us grace in redeeming us out of Egypt, so show us grace in clearing us of this murder (Ibn Ezra).

*suffer not innocent blood, etc.*] As long as the murder is unsolved it incriminates the entire community, hence the urgency of expiation in order to clear the community.

*shall be forgiven them*] נָקַם, like נָקַם in Ezek. 23.48, is generally taken to be a rare Nithpa'el form, a conflate of the two reflexive conjugations Hithpa'el and Niph'al (Ibn Ezra), which is common in post-biblical Hebrew (comp. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, pp. 64 ff.).

9. *So*] Namely by performing the rite of expiation as prescribed above.

*put away*] Rather "wipe out, exterminate completely"; similarly 19.13.

- 10 When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies,  
 and the LORD thy God delivereth them into thy hands,  
 11 and thou carriest them away captive, and seest among  
 the captives a woman of goodly form, and thou hast a  
 desire unto her, and wouldest take her to thee to wife;  
 12 then thou shalt bring her home to thy house; and she shall  
 13 shave her head, and pare her nails; and she shall put

#### 10-14. MARRIAGE WITH A FEMALE CAPTIVE OF WAR.

This section properly belongs to the war legislation in chapter 20, from which it is separated by verses 1-9 (Ibn Ezra). More specifically it connects with 20.14, where permission is given to take the women and the little ones of the enemy "for a prey" (Mekilta cited by Hoffmann ad loc.).

10. *When thou goest forth to battle*] So 20.1. The reference is to optional wars (Sifre), since in obligatory wars, fought in and around Canaan, nothing that breathes was saved alive, comp. 20.16 (Rashi).  
*delivereth them*] Literally "delivereth him," sing. for pl.; similarly 7.10, and elsewhere.

*carriest them away captive*] Literally "capturest his captives," similarly Num. 21.2; Judg. 5.12; Ps. 68.19. *קָדַשׁ* is either an abstract noun meaning "captivity" or, as here, a collective noun denoting "captives."

11. *captives*] *קָדַשׁ*, like *קָדַשׁ*, is either an abstract noun meaning "captivity" or is used collectively in the sense of "captives."

*a woman*] The construct *אִשָּׁה* instead of the absolute *אִשָּׁה*, as in I Sam. 28.7 and Ps. 58.9.

*wouldest take her, etc.*] She must not be forced to enter into marriage relations at once, while she is still mourning over her family, but should be allowed to wait one month, see below v. 13.

12. *shave her head*] As an act of cleanliness or rite of purification from heathenism (so most commentators). Others explain it as a sign of mourning, comp. Jer. 48.37.

*pare her nails*] *עָשָׂה* means literally "make," hence the derived connotation "put in order, shape well," comp. II Sam. 19.25 (of the beard). Another interpretation, considering it as a mourning symbol, takes the

the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thy house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month; and after that thou mayest go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be, <sup>14</sup> if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not deal with her as a slave, because thou hast humbled her.

verb to mean "to let grow" (Targum, Philo, Yeb. 48a, Sifre, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, RMbN, RMbM, etc.), which may be supported by an Arabic root 'asa meaning "become coarse and rough" (of the hand). On similar customs among the Arabs comp. W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 178.

13. *the raiment of her captivity*] According to some commentators, because it is unclean, others explain it on the basis that the dresses of the captive women were dazzling and attractive, hence they were to divest themselves of them in their mourning (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

*a full month*] ירח ימים, pleonastically "a month of days" or "a month of time," so also II Kings 15.13; similarly חודש ימים in Gen. 29.14; Num. 11.20 f. A month was the customary period of mourning, comp. 34.8; Num. 20.29, and elsewhere (so also Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV. 8.23). This length of time was required in order to prepare her for her entrance into the Jewish community and her adoption of the Hebrew faith. On the other hand, there is a statement in Yeb. 47b to the effect that a captive woman may be married at once if she accepts Judaism of her own volition. This regulation has its analogy among the Arabs, Mohammed having permitted a female captive, though previously married, to become at once the concubine of her captor.

14. *let her go, etc.*] Similarly Jer. 34.16. According to Sifre ad loc., the phrase implies a formal divorce, not merely a flat dismissal.

*not sell her*] For a similar restriction comp. Ex. 21.8.

*deal with her as a slave*] הוֹתַעֲמָהּ, which occurs only here and in 24.7, is of doubtful origin and meaning; but contextually it denotes "deal tyrannically, play the master" (so also Septuagint on 24.7).

*humbled her*] עָנָה is used frequently in the sense of dishonoring a woman or depriving her of her womanly rights, comp. 22.24, 29; Gen. 34.2, and elsewhere.

- 15 If a man have two wives, the one beloved, and the other hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that was  
 16 hated; then it shall be, in the day that he causeth his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved the first-born before the son of the  
 17 hated, who is the first-born; but he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the hated, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; for he is the first-fruits of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

#### 15-17. THE RIGHTS OF THE FIRST-BORN.

The right of primogeniture, an ancient and primitive right, was highly esteemed in ancient Israel (Gen. 25.31 ff.; 27.36), where, as among other tribes and nations, the first-born possessed certain rights and privileges which were not shared by his younger brothers. Thus he succeeded to his father's rank and position, as head of the family and as representative of its prerogatives. He also inherited a double portion of his father's property. On the other hand, a first-born might be disinherited by his father in favor of a younger son, as in the case of Reuben (Gen. 49.2 ff.) and Adonijah (I Kings, chapters 1-2), or a birthright might be sold to a younger brother, as Esau sold his birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25.29 ff.). On the rights of inheritance in Babylonia and Assyria, comp. Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws*, chapter XVI; on the laws of inheritance in Arabia, comp. W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 53 ff.

15. *the one beloved, and the other hated*] As, for instance, in the case of Jacob (Gen. 29.30 f.) and Samuel (I Sam. 1.5).

16. *that he may not make, etc.*] This is exactly what happened in the case of Jacob, who transferred the right of primogeniture from Reuben to Joseph (Gen. 49.3 f.), and also in the case of David, who appointed as his successor his younger son Solomon instead of his older son Adonijah (I Kings, chapters 1 f.).

17. *a double portion*] פִּי שְׁנַיִם, an idiomatic expression found also in II Kings 2.9 and Zech. 13.8. Accordingly the first-born is to receive a share twice as large as any of his brothers, whether the father likes it or not.

*the first-fruits of his strength*] So also Gen. 49.3; Ps. 78.51 and 105.36.

If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, that will 18  
 not hearken to the voice of his father, or the voice of his  
 mother, and though they chasten him, will not hearken  
 unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold 19  
 on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and  
 unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the 20  
 elders of his city: 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious,  
 he doth not hearken to our voice; he is a glutton, and a  
 drunkard.' And all the men of his city shall stone him 21  
 with stones, that he die; so shalt thou put away the evil  
 from the midst of thee; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

#### 18-21. THE INCORRIGIBLE SON.

This law, peculiar to Deuteronomy, may be considered an extension of Ex. 21.15 ("he that smiteth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death") and 17 ("he that curseth his father or mother shall surely be put to death"), repeated in Lev. 20.9. Comp. also 27.16 ("cursed be he that dishonoureth his father and his mother"). According to the Talmud (Sanh. 71a), the law of the incorrigible son is hypothetical and was never really operative.

18. *stubborn and rebellious*] So also Jer. 5.23 and Ps. 78.8.

*that will not hearken*] A further explanation of the preceding phrase.  
*they chasten him*] i. e. through exhortation (Septuagint, Targum, Peshitta) or through bodily punishment (Mishna Sanh. 8.4, Sifre), similarly 22.18.

19. *the elders of his city*] Who alone had power over life and death. The father was not permitted to dispose of the life of his own child, as was customary among the Greeks and Romans.

*the gate of his place*] i. e. the seat of judgment, where the elders sat to administer justice, comp. 22.15; 25.7; Ruth 4.1 ff.

20. *a glutton and a drunkard*] i. e. a gluttonous eater of flesh and a winebibber, comp. Prov. 23.20 f.

21. *all the men of his city*] Since it is in their interest to exterminate evil from their midst.

*hear and fear*] Similarly 13.12; 17.13; 19.20.

- 22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death,  
 23 and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is a reproach unto God; that thou defile not thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

### 22-23. EXPOSURE OF THE CORPSE OF A CRIMINAL.

22. *a sin worthy of death*] Literally "a sin of a judgment of death," i.e. a sin incurring a judgment of death.

*hang him on a tree*] After he had been put to death. This was intended for publication, so that the people might be made aware that the supreme penalty had been exacted for the offence. The hanging of the corpse was to serve as a warning to people to abstain from such an offence in the future.

23. *his body shall not remain, etc.*] In Josh. 8.29 and 10.27 the bodies of the kings defeated by Joshua are hung on a tree until eventide and are removed at the going down of the sun.

*bury him the same day*] According to the Talmud (Sanh. 46b), this applies to every dead body.

*he that is hanged is a reproach unto God*] Literally "he that is hanged is a curse of God," i. e. accursed of God (so ancient versions and modern commentators); but the Jewish interpretation treats אלהים as an objective genitive "a curse (or reproach) to God" (so Rashi and others). A similar interpretation, but rendering אלהים "judge," is advanced by RSbM and Luzzatto: "he that is hanged is a reproach to the judge," for people that pass by will pity the hanged body and blame the judge for the execution. Ibn Ezra construes אלהים as subject: "he that is hanged brings about the curse of God on the place of the hanging." Sifre "because he cursed God" (similarly Targum, Symmachus and Peshitta). The Gaon Elijah of Wilna construes אלהים as a superlative, rendering quite strikingly "a very great curse," comp. הררי אל "mighty mountains" and עלהבת יה "a powerful flame."

*defile not thy land*] The removal of the corpse is not for the benefit of the dead person, but for the benefit of the land. Hence as soon as the requisite publicity has been attained, the body is to be removed, so as not to defile the land by its presence.

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep driven **22**  
 away, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely bring  
 them back unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not <sup>2</sup>  
 nigh unto thee, and thou know him not, then thou shalt  
 bring it home to thy house, and it shall be with thee until  
 thy brother require it, and thou shalt restore it to him.  
 And so shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do <sup>3</sup>  
 with his garment; and so shalt thou do with every lost  
 thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast  
 found; thou mayest not hide thyself.

## CHAPTER 22.

## 1-3. RESTORATION OF LOST PROPERTY.

This humane law, which is found with some modifications among other Semitic tribes, is an elaboration with greater detail of Ex. 23.4.

1. *Thou shalt not see*] In Exodus, "If thou meet."

*thy brother's*] In Exodus, "thine enemy's." The former may be a more restricted (Marti and others) or more general application (Driver and others) of this law.

*his sheep*] In Exodus, "his ass."

*driven away*] viz. from the herd, hence lost. In Exodus, "going astray."

*hide thyself*] The verb *התחלם* in this sense occurs also in Isa. 58.7, and elsewhere. According to Sifre (comp. also B. M. 30a), one may refrain from the benevolent act under certain circumstances, as, e. g., when one is old and too dignified for such an exertion.

2. *nigh unto thee*] The finder is not obliged to travel a long distance in order to restore lost property.

*to thy house*] But not to the house of another (Sifre).

*require it*] Rather "demand it," as something belonging to him.

*restore it to him*] According to the Talmud (B. M. 28b), it is to be restored without any damage.

3. A qualifying sentence: This law applies to every kind of lost property, animate or inanimate, large or small.



- 4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.
- 5 A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto the LORD thy God.
- 6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and

#### 4. LIFTING FALLEN BEASTS.

This law is based on Ex. 23.5.

*thy brother's]* In Exodus, "of him that hateth thee," comp. above v. 1.

*fallen down by the way]* In Exodus, "lying under its burden."

*help him to lift them up again]* A more simple phrase than "release it with him" of Exodus.

#### 5. MALES AND FEMALES MUST NOT INTERCHANGE GARMENTS.

This law, which is peculiar to Deuteronomy, is directed primarily against heathen rites and pagan practices (Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 27), particularly in Canaan and Syria, where sacrifices were offered to deities of mixed sex by men dressed as women and women dressed as men (comp. W. R. Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*,<sup>2</sup> p. 365). As may be seen from the later Greek or Roman period, these rites led to gross impurities and extreme licentiousness.

*that which pertaineth unto a man]* More properly "a man's article," i. e. anything worn by man, including weapons, ornaments, etc., not only garments.

*an abomination]* A term used in connection with idolatry, comp. on 7.25.

#### 6-7. SPARING THE MOTHER-BIRD.

6. *chance to be]* The root קרא (so also II Sam. 18.9) is a parallel form of קרה "encounter, meet."

*young ones or eggs]* In apposition with "bird's nest," of which this is explanatory.

the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.

When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a parapet for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence.

Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed;

*thou shalt not take*] Namely for humanitarian reasons (Luzzatto and others).

*the dam with the young*] לַי here means "together with," similarly Gen. 32.12; Hos. 10.14, and elsewhere.

7. *thou mayest take*] viz. for sustenance.

*that it may be well with thee*] Similarly 4.40; 5.16, etc.

## 8. PARAPETS ON ROOFS.

*a parapet*] סִפְּיָה, a hapax legomenon, means properly "a confined space, an enclosure" (Ibn Ezra), being derived from a root which in Arabic signifies "hinder." The roofs of Oriental houses being generally flat and used for recreation in the evening (Josh. 2.6; II Sam. 11.2, etc.), a parapet was necessary to prevent people from falling off the edge.

*if any man fall*] Literally "he that falls will fall," an idiomatic expression like "he that dies will die" in 17.6.

## 9. AGAINST MIXING SEEDS.

This prohibition is an expansion of Lev. 19.19, and its aim is no doubt to preserve natural distinctions and characteristic features of everything created. This and other problems pertaining to mixture are treated at great detail in the Mishna tractate Kilayim.

*thy vineyard*] In Leviticus, "thy field," a more general term.

*with two kinds of seed*] כְּלָאִים, denoting "of two kinds," occurs only here and in Leviticus.

lest the fulness of the seed which thou hast sown be forfeited together with the increase of the vineyard.

- 10 Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.  
 11 Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together.

*the fulness of the seed*] המלאה הזרע, two nouns in apposition instead of subordination, comp. GKC., § 131.

*be forfeited*] Literally "become holy," or untouchable, and consequently set aside for the sanctuary.

#### 10. AGAINST MIXING ANIMALS IN PLOUGHING.

This prohibition is peculiar to Deuteronomy. It is interesting to note that such a combination, an ox and an ass ploughing together, may still be met with in Palestine (comp. Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine*, p. 328).

*plow*] The prohibition applies only to work, otherwise animals may be joined (Rashi).

*an ox and an ass*] According to Sifre and Mishna Kil. 8.2 ff., any other two kinds of animals are likewise forbidden. Maimonides maintains that only such combinations are prohibited of which one animal is clean and the other unclean.

#### 11. AGAINST MIXING CLOTHS IN A GARMENT.

Comp. Lev. 19.19, where this prohibition is found in the same sense, though not in the same words.

*Thou shalt not wear*] In Leviticus, "shall there come upon thee."

*a mingled stuff*] שֶׁעָמַת, only here and in Leviticus, is of doubtful origin. It is generally explained as a combination of two Egyptian words meaning "woven falsely" (so also Septuagint).

*wool and linen together*] This is explanatory of the preceding phrase and corresponds to כְּלָאִים "of two kinds" in Leviticus.

#### 12. TWISTED CORDS UPON THE FOUR CORNERS OF A MANTLE.

This law is stated more elaborately in Num. 15.37 ff., where these appendages are said to serve as reminders of Israel's obligations to God.

Thou shalt make thee twisted cords upon the four corners of thy covering, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, and lay wanton charges against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say: 'I took this woman, and when I came nigh to her, I found not in her the tokens of virginity'; then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's

*twisted cords*] מְדֻלָּלִים is derived from a root which in Syrian Arabic means "to twist" or "to plait," hence in I Kings 7.17 it denotes "wreaths" (of metal). In the parallel passage of Numbers we find instead the more technical term תַּצִּטָּה "tassels", or rather twisted cords ending in tassels.

*thy covering*] i. e. a woollen wrap or mantle in the form of the modern 'abaya, with four corners at which the tassels were attached. The *tallith* is a later development of this covering.

*thou coverest thyself*] The reflexive is not evident in the Hebrew, but is understood.

### 13-21. IMPUTATION OF UNCHASTITY TO A BRIDE.

13. *go in unto her*] i. e. unto her tent or apartment, for the purpose of cohabitation.

*hate her*] His love changes to hatred after his lust has been appeased.

14. *wanton charges*] Properly "caprices of words" (Dillmann, Driver). The ancient versions and medieval commentaries render either "occasions of words" or "pretexts of words," i. e. fictitious charges.

*tokens of virginity*] בְּחֻלִּים is an abstract noun used in the plural only and denoting "virginity"; here it is employed in the concrete sense of physical signs of virginity. Comp. below on the following verse.

15. *damsel*] The Hebrew word is written defectively נָעִר throughout the Pentateuch, except verse 19 below, where it is written plene נַעֲרָה.

*bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity*] The custom of producing the tokens of the bride's virginity immediately after marriage

16 virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate. And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders: 'I gave my daughter  
 17 ter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; and, lo, he hath laid wanton charges, saying: I found not in thy daughter the tokens of virginity; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread  
 18 the garment before the elders of the city. And the elders  
 19 of that city shall take the man and chastise him. And they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.

is still prevalent among many tribes of the East and also among orthodox Jews in eastern Europe, though their absence is by no means conclusive proof of the bride's unchastity. The ceremony consists in displaying ostentatiously to the relatives of the newly-married couple a white sheet with splashes of blood.

*the elders of the city, etc]* Comp. on 21.19.

17. *spread the garment]* שטלה here is probably used in a more general sense than mere garment: perhaps it denotes any cloth or sheet on which people sleep, comp. 24.13, where שלמה (metathesis for שטלה) is employed in this sense.

18. *chastise him]* יסר implies corporal punishment, comp. on 21.18. According to Targum, Sifre, and Josephus (*Antiquities*, IV. 8.23), they inflicted upon him the customary forty stripes (see 25.3).

19. *a hundred shekels of silver]* i. e. double the amount of the mohar or dowry, which is fifty shekels (RMbN), or double the amount payable by the seducer of an unbetrothed virgin (see below v. 29).

*unto the father of the damsel]* As compensation for the defamation of his daughter's character.

*she shall be his wife]* In spite of his effort to get rid of her.

*put her away]* i. e. divorce her.

But if this thing be true, that the tokens of virginity 20  
were not found in the damsel; then they shall bring out 21  
the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men  
of her city shall stone her with stones that she die; because  
she hath wrought a wanton deed in Israel, to play the  
harlot in her father's house; so shalt thou put away the  
evil from the midst of thee.

If a man be found lying with a woman married to a 22  
husband, then they shall both of them die, the man that .

20. *if this thing*] i. e. if the accusation of the husband is demon-  
strated to be true.

21. *to the door of her father's house*] Her punishment is to be public,  
in front of the house which she disgraced through her infamous act  
and in presence of all the people of her city who are offended by her  
immorality.

*stone her*] Assuming that she had been ravished by a man before  
her marriage, when she was yet an unbetrothed virgin, the penalty of  
stoning appears to be too severe, especially in view of the express  
regulation that if an unbetrothed virgin is ravished she receives no  
punishment whatever (below vv. 28 f.). Hence Jewish commentators  
(as, for instance, Ibn Ezra) assume that the rape must have taken  
place when she was already betrothed and therefore regarded as the  
wife of her future husband.

*a wanton deed*] *זנות*, used mostly of immorality (comp. Gen. 34.7;  
Judg. 20.6, etc.), but also of irreligion (comp. Josh. 7.15).

## 22. CONCERNING ADULTERY.

Adultery is forbidden in the Decalogue, in Lev. 18.20 and 20.10,  
where the same penalty is provided as here.

*married to a husband*] So also Gen. 20.3.

*die*] The manner of death is not indicated here nor in Leviticus,  
but, by analogy with v. 24, it is assumed to be stoning, comp. Ezek.  
16.40 and 23.47. According to Sifre and Sanh. 52b, the death is by  
strangulation.

lay with the woman, and the woman; so shalt thou put away the evil from Israel.

- 23 If there be a damsel that is a virgin betrothed unto a  
 24 man, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die: the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife; so thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.
- 25 But if the man find the damsel that is betrothed in the field, and the man take hold of her, and lie with her; then  
 26 the man only that lay with her shall die. But unto the

### 23-27. INTERCOURSE WITH A BETROTHED VIRGIN.

23. *betrothed unto a man*] Betrothal, a preliminary to marriage, was considered in the East almost equivalent to marriage (comp. W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 78 f.), hence intercourse with a betrothed virgin is treated as a case of adultery (comp. the expression "his neighbour's wife" in the following verse).

*in the city*] i. e. in an inhabited place, where she could have offered resistance.

24. *the gate of that city*] Which is the seat of judgment for that locality.

*his neighbour's wife*] Properly betrothed, but regarded as married, comp. comment on the preceding verse.

25. *in the field*] i. e. in an uninhabited place, where people could not come to her rescue.

*take hold of her*] i. e. violently and against her will, similarly II Sam. 13.11.

damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death; for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter. For he 27 found her in the field; the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, that is not be- 28 trothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto 29 the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days.

26. *sin worthy of death*] Literally "a sin of death," comp. 21.22. *riseth against his neighbour, etc.*] Comp. 19.11. The attack on the woman's honor is compared to an attack on life, against which one is helpless.

27. *the betrothed damsel cried*] But her voice could not have been heard.

#### 28-29. INTERCOURSE WITH AN UNBETROTHED VIRGIN.

A similar regulation in Ex. 22.15 f. provides that the man pay a dowry of an undefined amount and that the father of the girl may refuse to give her to him in marriage.

28. *lay hold on her*] viz. by force, as in v. 25. In the parallel passage of Exodus a different term is used, *נָחַץ* "entice," implying persuasion used by the seducer.

29. *fifty shekels of silver*] The seducer is to pay to the father of the girl the customary *mohar* or purchase-price of a wife (comp. Gen. 34.12; Ex. 22.16, etc.), which was fixed at an average of fifty silver shekels, and is compelled to retain the girl as his wife all his days, without the customary legal right to divorce her.



- 23** A man shall not take his father's wife, and shall not uncover his father's skirt.
- 2** He that is crushed or maimed in his privy parts shall not enter into the assembly of the LORD.

## CHAPTER 23.

### 1. AGAINST INTERCOURSE WITH A FATHER'S WIFE.

This prohibition is similar to Lev. 18.8 and 20.11, where death is prescribed for both offenders.

*uncover his father's skirt*] So also 27.20. This expression is evidently a euphemism for the act of sexual intercourse. Comp. the similar expression "to spread the skirt" over a woman in the sense of taking her as a wife (Ezek. 16.8; Ruth 3.9).

### 2. EUNUCHS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE CONGREGATION.

*crushed or maimed in his privy parts*] This is the general sense of the Hebrew phrase, which more particularly refers to two surgical operations by which the condition of a eunuch was produced. פצוע-דכה means literally "one wounded by crushing" (his testicles); כרוח שפכה signifies "one whose fluid-duct (i. e. male organ) has been cut off." According to travelers in the Orient, the latter process for producing eunuchs is more common in modern times (comp. Driver ad loc.).

*shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord*] According to Jewish tradition (Talmud, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, etc.), this implies that he must not enter into conjugal union with an Israelite woman. The reason for his exclusion may have been twofold: a maimed and mutilated person was naturally considered blemished and imperfect, and hence unfit for a theocratic community (comp. 14.1 f.); but, more than a religious stigma, a moral stain was attached to eunuchs, since they were known to be either in the service of heathen deities or else faithful servants of ruthless monarchs and tyrants, which gave them an unsavory name and a bad reputation. Nevertheless, a later prophet (Isa. 56.4 f.) promises to eunuchs, who are obedient to God and keep His commandments, an honorable position in the ideal community of the future.

A bastard shall not enter into the assembly of the LORD; <sup>3</sup> even to the tenth generation shall none of his enter into the assembly of the LORD.

An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the <sup>4</sup> assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation shall none of them enter into the assembly of the LORD for ever; because they met you not with bread and with water in <sup>5</sup> the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because

### 3. BASTARDS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE CONGREGATION.

*bastard*] מִמּוֹר, here and in Zech. 9.6, is of uncertain etymology. Most commentators derive it from a stem מוֹר meaning "be bad, foul, corrupt." The Talmud (Yeb. 76b) construes it as composed of two words: מוֹר, "a strange blemish." Geiger (*Urschrift*, p. 52) thinks it is made up of מִקֵּם זָר "of a foreign nation," which seems to fit the passage in Zechariah. The Mishna (Yeb. 4.13) characterizes a *mamzer* as an offspring of an incestuous union, i. e. any of the unlawful unions enumerated in Lev. 18.6-20 and 20.10-21.

*even to the tenth generation*] The stain of his birth clings to him for many generations. Ten is a round number.

### 4-7. AMMONITES AND MOABITES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE CONGREGATION.

4. *An Ammonite*] See on 2.19.

*a Moabite*] Comp. on 1.5.

*for ever*] Like bastards, Ammonites and Moabites are forbidden to enter the congregation even to the tenth generation, with the additional qualification "for ever," i. e. they must never be associated with the community of Israel, on account of their hostility to Israel after the exodus from Egypt.

5. *they met you not with bread, etc.*] The sense probably is "they did not magnanimously offer you bread and water free of charge," for we learn from 2.29 that the Moabites sold the Israelites bread and water for money.

*in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt*] The exodus and the peregrinations in the desert are considered here as a closed period. The same phrase is found also in 24.9; 25.17.

- they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor from  
 6 Pethor of Aram-naharaim, to curse thee. Nevertheless the  
 LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the  
 LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee,  
 7 because the LORD thy God loved thee. Thou shalt not  
 seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.  
 8 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother;

*they hired*] סָכַר really means "he hired," the reference being to Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, who hired Balaam (Num. 22.5 f.). The Ammonites, it appears, had nothing to do with the hiring of Balaam to curse Israel.

*Pethor of Aram-naharaim*] Num. 22.5 has "Pethor, which is by the River," namely the Euphrates. This locality is assumed to be identical with Pitru of the inscriptions of Shalmanassar II, situated on the western bank of the Euphrates, near the river Sagura (now Sajur), a few miles south of the Hittite capital Carchemish. Aram-naharaim denotes "Aram of the two rivers," i. e. Mesopotamia, so also Gen. 24.10; Judg. 3.8; Ps. 60.2.

6. *turned the curse into a blessing*] Comp. Num. 23.7 ff.

7. *Thou shalt not seek, etc.*] This is a warning not to enter into any alliance or peace treaty with these hostile nations (Sifre). King David once neglected this warning (II Sam., chapter 10) and consequently became involved in a destructive war (Kimhi). The abhorrence of Ammon and Moab was emphasized also in the Prophets, comp. Isa. 16.6; Jer. 48.26 ff.; Ezek. 21.33; 25.3 ff.; Zeph. 2.8 f.

#### 8-9. EDMITES AND EGYPTIANS SHOULD NOT BE ABHORRED.

8. *he is thy brother*] Edomites were descendants of Edom or Esau (Gen. 36.1 ff.), a brother of Jacob. Although continuous rivalry and hostility existed between the Hebrews and Edomites, yet on account of their blood-relationship the former are enjoined not to hate the latter with the same intense hatred with which they were told to hate the Ammonites and Moabites.

thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land. The children of the third generation that 9 are born unto them may enter into the assembly of the LORD.

When thou goest forth in camp against thine enemies, 10 then thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing. If there 11 be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of that which chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp. But 12 it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall bathe himself

*thou wast a stranger in his land]* In spite of the oppression in Egypt, which was never suffered to be forgotten, the Hebrews are not to abhor the Egyptians, for the reason that they had once been sojourners in their land.

9. *of the third generation]* In the case of Edomites and Egyptians descendants of the third generation may enter the theocratic community, i. e. intermarry with Israelites, provided, of course, that they conform to all the precepts of the Israelite faith.

#### 10-15. HOLINESS OF THE CAMP.

10. *When thou goest forth]* So 20.1 and 21.10.

*in camp]* מחנה, properly "as a camp," an accusative expressing the manner in which an action or state takes place (GKC., § 118m).

*every evil thing]* i. e. everything that is evil to mind and body (Ibn Ezra).

11. *by reason of that which chanceth him by night]* מקרה consists of the prefixed preposition מן and the construct state of קרה "chance, accident". The reference is to a nocturnal pollution, which is treated in Lev. 15.16 and is known in talmudic literature as קרי.

*out of the camp]* For the camp was considered a holy place, comp. below v. 15.

12. *when evening cometh on]* Literally "at the turning toward evening," comp. the similar expression "at the turning toward morning" in Ex. 14.27, and elsewhere.

*he shall bathe himself, etc.]* Comp. Lev. 15.16, where the same purificatory rite is prescribed.

in water; and when the sun is down, he may come within  
 13 the camp. Thou shalt have a place also without the camp,  
 14 whither thou shalt go forth abroad. And thou shalt have  
 a paddle among thy weapons; and it shall be, when thou  
 sittest down abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt  
 15 turn back and cover that which cometh from thee. For  
 the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to  
 deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee;  
 therefore shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unseemly  
 thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

13. *a place*] יד "hand," figuratively "side, place," comp. 2.37; Num. 2.17; Jer. 6.3, etc. Used here in the sense of "privy".

*abroad*] חוץ is an accusative of place after a verb of motion (GKC., § 118d-g).

14. *a paddle*] יד is properly "a peg" for digging, hence a spade.  
*among thy weapons*] ל means here "in addition to" (comp. Gen. 28.9; Num. 31.8, etc.) and און is a hapax legomenon denoting "tools, implements" (common in Syriac and Aramaic as ܐܘܢ, which in Hebrew presumably received a prosthetic Aleph).

*that which cometh from thee*] As if derived from the stem צא "come forth," so rabbinic commentaries for the sake of euphemism; but modern lexicæ prefer to associate it with the Syriac stem צאצא "excrete" and its derived substantive צאצא "filth, excrement."

15. *walketh*] Literally "goes to and fro," i. e. constantly accompanies the camp wherever it moves.

*holy*] Holiness is here synonymous with cleanliness.

*unseemly thing*] Literally "the nakedness of a thing," i. e. indecency, so also 24.1.

*turn away from thee*] More strictly "turn back from after thee." i. e. will not follow thee any longer.

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a bondman that 16  
is escaped from his master unto thee; he shall dwell with 17  
thee, in the midst of thee, in the place which he shall  
choose within one of thy gates, where it liketh him best;  
thou shalt not wrong him.

There shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, 18  
neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel.  
Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the price of a dog, 19

16-17. A FUGITIVE SLAVE SHOULD NOT BE RETURNED  
TO HIS MASTER.

16. *a bondman*] Namely a non-Israelite slave from a foreign  
country (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

*from his master*] The Hebrew properly denotes "from being with  
his master."

17. *gates*] i. e. cities.

*wrong him*] Properly "oppress, maltreat," not even through words  
(Sifre).

18-19. AGAINST RELIGIOUS PROSTITUTION.

18. *harlot . . . sodomite*] קדש and קדשה, fem. and masc. of an  
adjective meaning primarily "sacred," for such persons consecrated  
themselves to a heathen deity for immoral purposes, sacrificing their  
chastity to it. Hence a better rendering is "hierodule" or Temple-  
prostitute. The allusion is to the abominable and repulsive custom  
prevalent in Canaanite and Phoenician cults, which consisted in women  
and men prostituting themselves in a sanctuary in the service of pagan  
gods or goddesses.

19. *the hire of a harlot*] זנות is a term used also elsewhere (comp.  
Isa. 23.17 f.; Ezek. 16.34; Mic. 1.7) for the income of a harlot, whether  
she be common or sacred.

*the price of a dog*] i. e. the payment a sodomite receives for his  
immoral services. The term כלב occurs as a synonym of קדש in a  
Phoenician inscription from Larnaca reproduced in *Corpus Inscriptio-  
num Semiticarum*, I, 97. Comp. also W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the  
Religion of the Semites*<sup>3</sup>, p. 612.

into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow; for even both these are an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

- 20 Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother: interest of money, interest of victuals, interest of any thing  
 21 that is lent upon interest. Unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou puttest thy hand unto, in the land whither thou goest in to possess it.

*into the house of the Lord]* It was a common custom in Phoenicia to offer the gains of prostitution to a deity.

*both these]* i. e. the hire of a harlot and the price of a sodomite.  
*abomination]* Comp. 18.12.

#### 20-21. ON INTEREST.

20. *Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother]* Similarly Ex. 22.24 and Lev. 25.36 f. The reason for this prohibition is seen in the fact that all loans in ancient Israel were for the purpose of relieving distress or minimizing poverty (see Ex. 22.24), not for the purpose of engaging in commerce and deriving profit therefrom, as came to be the case in later years. Hence the prohibition of interest still exists in Arabia, comp. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I, 318.

*lend upon interest]* The Hebrew verb is a denominative of  $\text{לָקַח}$ , which means literally "something bitten off," hence interest, because it was bitten off the amount lent and given to the lender.

*interest of victuals]* Most loans were in kind.

*that is lent upon interest]* The Hebrew verb is imperf. Kal and denotes properly "one giveth interest."

21. *Unto a foreigner, etc.]* This provision is found only in Deuteronomy. The reason probably lies in the fact that foreigners visited Palestine for the purpose of doing business there in commodities and reaping profits therefrom (Luzzatto and others). Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the foreigner was likewise permitted to exact interest from the Israelite (Schultz). For a similar provision, comp. 15.3.

*may bless thee, etc.]* Comp. 12.7.

When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, <sup>22</sup> thou shalt not be slack to pay it; for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it will be sin in thee. But <sup>23</sup> if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and <sup>24</sup> do; according as thou hast vowed freely unto the LORD thy God, even that which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

#### 22-24. CONCERNING VOWS.

It was common to people in ancient times to seek the help of a deity in distress or danger by promising him some special gift which was likely to enlist his interest on their side. Less common were vows originating from unselfish zeal and pious devotion, such as the ascetic's obligation to abstain from the comforts and even necessities of life. Among the Hebrews vows played an important part, as may be seen from Num. chapter 30, where the laws concerning them are stated fully and in considerable detail. Here only a few fresh regulations are added. The talmudic tractate Nedarim deals with the various kinds and occasions of vows, as deduced from the biblical text.

**22.** *When thou shalt vow, etc.*] Similarly Num. 30.3.

*slack to pay it*] A vow was so sacred that it had to be fulfilled as soon as possible. The prompt payment of vows is also the subject of the prophetic and poetical books of the Bible, comp. Isa. 19.21; Jon. 2.10; Nah. 2.1; Ps. 22.26, etc.

*it will be sin in thee*] viz. if you do not pay it.

**23.** *forbear to vow*] One does not have to vow, but once one makes a vow one has to fulfill it.

**24.** *That which is gone out of thy lips*] The reference is, of course, only to solemn utterances, such as vows.

*observe and do*] Comp. on 4.6.

*freely*] נדבה is construed adverbially; similarly Hos. 14.5. The sense is that whatever was offered voluntarily to God through a vow must be duly rendered to Him.



- 25 When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes until thou have enough at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel.
- 26 When thou comest into thy neighbour's standing corn, then thou mayest pluck ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.
- 24 When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it cometh to pass, if she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he writeth

#### 25-26. REGARD FOR A NEIGHBOR'S CROPS.

25. *When thou comest, etc.*] According to Jewish tradition (B. M. 87b, Sifre and Targum ad loc.; contrast B. M. 92a and Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV. 8.21), the reference here and in the following verse is to laborers who are hired to work in the vineyard and in the field.

*at thine own pleasure*] Literally "according to thy soul," or appetite, comp. 12.20 and 14.26, more particularly Prov. 13.25.

*in thy vessel*] With the intention of carrying it away.

26. *standing corn*] See on 16.9.

*ears*] טלית, only here, though frequent in post-biblical Hebrew.  
*sickle*] Comp. 16.9. The idea is that one may pluck with the hand a few ears of corn here and there, but one must not cut off *en gros* with a sickle, for the purpose of carrying it away.

### CHAPTER 24.

#### 1-4. PROHIBITION OF REMARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE.

Here, as elsewhere (Lev. 21.7, 14; 22.13; Num. 30.10), the right of divorce is taken for granted (it was an absolute right, vested in man, among all Semitic nations), hence there are no regulations concerning it. The chief concern of the law is to prevent remarriage after divorce. Consequently vv. 1-3 must be construed as the protasis and v. 4 alone as the apodosis.

1. *if she find no favour, etc.*] In the Talmud (Git. 90a) there is a controversy between the schools of Shammai and Hillel as to what

her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, and she departeth out of his house, and goeth and becometh another man's wife, and the latter husband hateth her, and writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took

constituted a just ground for divorce. According to the former, the man is required to find in his wife some unseemly thing (comp. on 23.15), which is interpreted to mean some conjugal infidelity or unchastity; according to the latter, any trivial reason or simply dislike is sufficient cause for divorce (similarly Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV. 8.33, and Philo, *Of Special Laws Relating to Adultery*, chapter 5). That "an unseemly thing" cannot refer to an act of conjugal infidelity or unchastity may be seen from the fact that for such an offence the penalty of death is provided in 22.22; moreover, in 23.15 the same expression is employed not for something that is immoral, but for something that is immodest or indecent.

*a bill of divorcement*] סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוֹת, literally "a writ of separation", so also v. 3; Isa. 50.1; Jer. 3.8. This legal document was known in post-biblical times by the name גֵּט. The talmudic tractate Gittin (plural of *get*) deals with the various conditions that have to be satisfied in order to make the bill of divorcement valid.

*in her hand*] i. e. to her personally, though according to the Rabbis (Sifre ad loc.), it may also be served anywhere within her premises.

*sendeth her out of his house*] This is another condition of divorce, that beside serving formally a writ of divorcement upon his wife the husband must also send her away out of his house. שְׁלַח "send away, dismiss," is the customary term for "divorce" in the Bible, comp. below v. 4; also 22.19, 29; Isa. 50.1, and elsewhere. Similarly, a divorced woman is known as גֵּרוּשָׁה "one driven out or expelled" from her husband's house (Lev. 21.14; Num. 30.10, etc.).

3. *hateth her*] So also 22.13. The reason for the dislike of the latter husband is not indicated, but very likely it is the same as in the case of the first husband, namely immodest or indecent behavior.

*if the latter husband die*] In which case she becomes a widow instead of a divorcee.

- 4 her to be his wife; her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD; and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.
- 5 When a man taketh a new wife, he shall not go out in the host, neither shall he be charged with any business; he

4. *her former husband, etc.*] The first three verses all belong to the protasis, the present verse begins the apodosis.

*after that she is defiled*] The form הִתְחַלְּתָּ is Hothpa'al, a very rare reflexive-passive conjugation, comp. GKC., § 54h. The implication of this phrase is that the marriage of a divorced woman was considered tantamount to adultery; hence divorce, though tolerated under certain conditions, was never really encouraged, comp. Mal. 2.13 ff. The Rabbis of the Talmud likewise looked upon divorce as a necessary evil, to which one may resort only in extreme cases of incompatibility.

*abomination*] Comp. on 7.25.

*cause the land to sin*] Similarly Jer. 3.1, the land being personified.

## 5. EXEMPTION OF THE NEWLY-WED FROM MILITARY SERVICE.

This liberal law, peculiar to Deuteronomy, is analogous to the regulations of 20.5 ff., the aim of which apparently is not to interfere in a man's domestic relations.

*a new wife*] i. e. a woman that is new to him, hence not only a virgin, but also a widow or a divorcee (Sifre, Rashi). Targum Yerushalmi interprets it as referring to a virgin only.

*in the host*] Thus he is on a par with one who has betrothed a wife and not taken her (20.7).

*be charged with any business*] A free rendering of an idiomatic phrase, which literally means "and no affair shall pass over upon him," i. e. no duty or obligation shall be laid upon him (the prefix of לָכֵל is taken as the ל of reference, meaning "as regards," comp. I Chron. 28.1; 29.6, etc.). Most commentators construe יִעָרֵךְ impersonally: "it shall not be imposed upon him." Somewhat different is the explanation of

shall be free for his house one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he hath taken.

No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone to pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge.

If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the

RMbN, who takes the subject of the verb to be *איש* and *עליו* as a reference to *צבא*: "he (the man) shall not pass on to the army (or for the sake of the army), in order to render some service to it."

*free*] i. e. exempt from any public service. For *נקי* "clean" in this sense comp. I Kings 15.22.

#### 6. THE MILL OR UPPER MILLSTONE IS NOT TO BE TAKEN IN PLEDGE.

The hand-mill was an indispensable article in every Eastern household, necessary for the very life of the family (comp. Jer. 25.10), hence it could not be taken away as a pledge.

*mill*] *רחים*, apparently a dual, because the hand-mill consisted of two flat circular stones, a lighter upper stone and a heavier nether stone. According to Rashi, the word stands for the nether stone alone.

*upper millstone*] *רכב*, literally "chariot" or "rider," for the upper rides on the lower.

*to pledge*] The Hebrew verb properly means "to bind" (by taking a pledge), hence "take or hold in pledge."

*a man's life*] The hand-mill supplies the family with its daily bread, and without it they might starve to death.

#### 7. AGAINST MAN-STEALING OR KIDNAPING.

This law against kidnaping has its parallel in Ex. 21.16: "And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." The gravity of the offence may be seen from the extreme penalty of death (inflicted, according to Mishna Sanh. 11.1, by strangulation). The motive for kidnaping in antiquity, as in modern times, was primarily profit: the kidnaped person was sold into foreign slavery (the Edomites, Philistines, Phoenicians, etc., were ready purchasers, comp. Ezek. 27.13 and Am. 1.6).

*If a man be found*] Similarly 21.1 and 22.22.

children of Israel, and he deal with him as a slave, and sell him; then that thief shall die; so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

- 8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you, as I commanded them, so ye shall  
9 observe to do. Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam, by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt.

*any*] נֶפֶשׁ "soul" denotes here "person," as in 10.22, and elsewhere.  
*deal with him as a slave*] Similarly 21.14.  
*sell him*] viz. into slavery in a foreign land.  
*shall die*] Namely by strangulation (Sifre).

#### 8-9. ON LEPROSY.

Leprosy (צִרְעָה), the name given to a variety of parasitic skin-diseases, was not uncommon in the ancient East. It was associated particularly with Egypt (Josephus, *Antiquities*, III.11.4), from where it is said to have spread to Palestine and Syria. There are many cases of supposed and real leprosy in the Bible, as, for instance, Miriam's affliction (Num. 12.10 f.), Naaman's eruption of the skin (II Kings, chapter 5), king Azariah's disease (ibid., 15.5 f.), etc. Our passage is but a general reminder to be cautious in the treatment of leprosy. Detailed regulations concerning this plague are found in Lev., chapters 13-14.

8. *the plague of leprosy*] נֹגע "touch, stroke, mark" has reference to the physical mark of the disease.

*the priests*] Apparently the rules and regulations concerning leprosy (known as "the law of the leper," Lev. 14.2) were in the possession of the priests, who were to instruct the people how to apply them.

*as I commanded them*] Their instructions are not the excogitations of their own mind, but are in accord with my commandments to them. Note the first person, as if God were speaking to them directly; comp. on 7.4.

9. *Remember, etc.*] The Hebrew employs an infinitive instead of an emphatic imperative, so also 25.17 (GKC., § 113bb). Moses calls attention to the seriousness of this dreadful disease.

*unto Miriam*] Comp. Num. 12.9 ff., where it is stated that Miriam was suddenly smitten with leprosy and consequently was excluded from the camp for seven days.

When thou dost lend thy neighbour any manner of 10  
loan, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.  
Thou shalt stand without, and the man to whom thou 11  
dost lend shall bring forth the pledge without unto thee.  
And if he be a poor man, thou shalt not sleep with his 12  
pledge; thou shalt surely restore to him the pledge when 13  
the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his garment,  
and bless thee; and it shall be righteousness unto thee  
before the LORD thy God.

#### 10-13. CONCERNING PLEDGES.

10. *When thou dost lend, etc.*] Comp. on 15.2.

*any manner of loan*] Literally "a loan of anything," i. e. money, produce, tools, and the like.

*to fetch his pledge*] Comp. 15.6. There is a controversy among the Rabbis concerning this point, some maintaining that the creditor only is not permitted to enter the debtor's house to fetch the pledge, but that court officials may do so; others assert that nobody has a right to enter the debtor's house to fetch the pledge, but the debtor himself is to bring it out to the creditor (B. M. 113b). However that may be, this humane provision, aimed to restrict the rights of the creditor, is unique and confined to Deuteronomy.

12. A further restriction of the rights of the creditor, based on Ex. 22.25 f.

*a poor man*] One to whom the pledge is indispensable at one time or another (Sifre).

*thou shalt not sleep with his pledge*] As stated in the following verse, the pledge here is understood to be a mantle, which poor people used to wear and also to sleep upon, comp. Ex. 22.26.

13. *when the sun goeth down*] Ex. 22.25 has "by that the sun goeth down."

*righteousness unto thee*] So also 6.25.

- 14 Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers  
 15 that are in thy land within thy gates. In the same day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin in thee.  
 16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,

#### 14-15. JUSTICE TOWARDS HIRED SERVANTS.

This humanitarian law is first stated briefly in Lev. 19.13: "the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning." Our passage states the same law with more elaboration of detail and filling-in of the ethical background.

14. *oppress*] *ṣāḥ* is used especially of oppression by extortion, comp. I Sam. 12.3 f.; Ezek. 18.18; Am. 4.1, etc.

*strangers*] The Hebrew uses the singular *ger* as a collective.

15. *In the same day*] Literally "in his day" (of work).

*give him his hire*] The Hebrew has only "give his hire"; this idiomatic use appears also in Gen. 30.18; Ex. 2.9, etc.

*setteth his heart upon it*] Literally "lifteth up his soul to it," i. e. strives after it; for this idiom see Jer. 22.27; 44.14; Ezek. 24.25; Hos. 4.8, etc.

*lest he cry, etc.*] Similarly 15.9.

#### 16. RESPONSIBILITY FOR CRIME IS INDIVIDUAL.

In ancient times the family, being the unit of society, suffered for the crime of an individual (comp. Josh. 7.24 f.; II Sam. 21.1 ff.; Est. 9.13 f.; Dan. 6.25). Only gradually the doctrine of individual responsibility was evolved as a more just and humane measure (comp. II Kings 14.6, where Amaziah is extolled for his adherence to the Deuteronomic principle of individual responsibility), hence it is reflected in the Prophets (Jer. 31.29; Ezek. chapter 18). This verse does not contradict 5.9 (Ex. 20.5), according to which God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children up to the fourth generation, for there the reference

neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers;  
every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

Thou shalt not pervert the justice due to the stranger, <sup>17</sup>  
or to the fatherless; nor take the widow's raiment to pledge.  
But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in <sup>18</sup>  
Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence;  
therefore I command thee to do this thing.

When thou reapest thy harvest in thy field, and hast <sup>19</sup>

is to divine judgment, while here only human judgment is involved,  
the instructions being directed to the judges of the court.

*for*] On this meaning of לַיָּד, comp. Jer. 15.15; Ps. 69.8, etc.

#### 17-18. JUSTICE TO THE HELPLESS.

This prescription is typical of the humane legislation of Deuteronomy, which is always solicitous about the unprotected and needy classes of society (comp. below, vv. 19 ff.; also 10.18; 14.29; 16.11). Parallels are not wanting in the earlier legislation of Israel, comp. Ex. 22.20 ff.; 23.6, 9; Lev. 19.33 f.

17. *pervert the justice*] Comp. 16.19.

*stranger*] See on 1.16.

*fatherless*] Comp. 10.18, etc.

*nor take the widow's raiment to pledge*] Since it is indispensable to her. This provision is analogous to the regulations contained in vv. 6 and 12 f.

18. *But thou shalt remember, etc.*] So below v. 22 and 15.15.

#### 19-22. GENEROSITY TO THE HELPLESS.

Of the three provisions cited here, the first and the third agree substantially with those contained in Lev. 19.9 f. and 23.22. As to the second, it is probably an extension of the same principle to the olive-garden. All of these regulations are treated extensively in the Mishna tractate Peah.



forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go back to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands.

- 20 When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the  
 21 fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it after thee; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the  
 22 widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt; therefore I command thee to do this thing.

19. *sheaf*] עמר, which is of doubtful origin, is rendered by some "swath," a row of fallen grain, by others "heap of sheaves" (comp. BDB., s. v.).

20. *When thou beatest thine olive-tree*] It was customary to collect the fruit of the olive-tree either by climbing into the trees and shaking the boughs or by beating off the fruit with long slender poles (Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, p. 128). A parallel expression for this act was ויקף, comp. Isa. 17.6 and 24.13.

*thou shalt not go over the boughs again*] i. e. thou shalt not search again between the boughs for stray olives still remaining there (Hul. 131a, Rashi). פאך, a denominative Pi'el of פאך "a bough", occurs only here.

21. *When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard*] Properly "when thou cuttest off thy vineyard" (with reference to grapes).

*thou shalt not glean it*] עולל is a denominative Po'el of עולל "gleaning" (going over a second time). According to a rabbinic tradition (Mishna Peah 7.4), the meaning is that certain small and undeveloped grapes should be left to the poor and needy.

22. *thou shalt remember, etc.*] Similarly above v. 18 and 15.15.

If there be a controversy between men, and they come **25**  
 unto judgment, and the judges judge them, by justifying  
 the righteous, and condemning the wicked, then it shall <sup>2</sup>  
 be, if the wicked man deserve to be beaten, that the judge  
 shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his  
 face, according to the measure of his wickedness, by  
 number. Forty stripes he may give him, he shall not <sup>3</sup>  
 exceed; lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these

## CHAPTER 25.

### 1-3. AGAINST EXCESSIVE PUNISHMENT BY BEATING.

1. *controversy*] Properly any strife or dispute that may be brought to court.

*unto judgment*] Namely in the house of judgment or court.

*and the judges judge them*] The Hebrew text has only "and they judge them," the judges being understood.

*by justifying the righteous, etc.*] Similarly I Kings 8.32. צַדִּיק and רָשָׁע are used here in the legal sense of "innocent" and "guilty."

2. *deserve to be beaten*] Literally "a son of beating," an idiomatic expression common in the Bible, comp., for instance, "a son of death," i. e. one who deserves to die, in I Sam. 20.31. The vocalization of בן with *hirek* instead of *segol* is paralleled in Josh. 1.1.

*before his face*] i. e. in the presence of the judge, no doubt to avoid maltreatment of the criminal.

*according to the measure of his wickedness*] i. e. in proportion to the gravity of the offence. Some think that this implies a varying number of stripes up to forty, not necessarily forty, as stated in the next verse; others are of the opinion that the number of stripes (forty) is fixed for all crime, only they should vary in intensity (Ibn Ezra).

*by number*] Hence the stripes are to be counted, not administered at random.

3. *Forty stripes*] This number is the maximum. To avoid the possibility of a mistake the Talmud fixed the number at thirty-nine, comp. Mishna Mak. 3.10 ff., also Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV.8.21 and 23.

with many stripes, then thy brother should be dishonoured before thine eyes.

- 4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

*be dishonoured*] Literally "become light," be humiliated. The idea is that, although a criminal, his punishment should not extend beyond his due, since such excessive punishment might cause him to lose every vestige of respect as a human being.

#### 4. A THRESHING OX SHOULD NOT BE MUZZLED.

This provision shows that kindness must be exercised not alone towards human beings, but also towards animals. Muzzling apparently was for the purpose of preventing the ox from eating the grain, and consequently it was considered cruelty to the animal.

*when he treadeth out the corn*] This manner of threshing corn is still prevalent in the East. The sheaves are spread out over the floor, and the oxen, yoked together in pairs, are made to move round a pivot in the center, stamping with their hoofs over the ears of corn, until the grain is separated from the husk (*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, I, 50).

#### 5-10. LEVIRATE MARRIAGE.

Levirate marriage, i. e. the custom of marrying the widow of one's brother, if he die childless, in order to raise up children to the dead man, has been shown to have existed, in one form or another, among many tribes and nations at certain stages of civilization (comp. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*,<sup>s</sup> III, 207 ff. and 261 ff.; also W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 122 ff.). According to James Frazer (*Folklore in the Old Testament*, II, 339), the levirate is complementary to the sororate and originated in a particular form of group marriage, namely in the marriage of a group of brothers to a group of sisters, but survived and assumed a different character in changed surroundings. Among the Israelites levirate marriage, although regulated for the first time in Deuteronomy, must have been an ancient institution, as may be seen from the story of Judah and Tamar in Gen., chapter 38. But while the principle of the levirate existed from time immemorial, some of the details became

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and <sup>5</sup> have no child, the wife of the dead shall not be married abroad unto one not of his kin; her husband's brother

modified in the course of time, hence the variations in the law as recorded in the books of Genesis, Deuteronomy and Ruth. In the earliest account in Genesis it appears to have been the duty of the dead man's brother to enter into conjugal union with the widow for the purpose of producing only one son, who would become the heir and bear the name of the deceased person; after that the widow was forbidden to him, but, having become free, she could marry anyone she pleased. In Deuteronomy, on the other hand, the brother of the deceased must marry the widow and retain her as his permanent wife even after she gave birth to the son who is to become the heir and assume the name of the deceased. Finally, the Book of Ruth exhibits another modification: here the next of kin, not necessarily a brother, is in duty bound to redeem a dead man's estate and marry his childless widow. In post-biblical times there was a tendency to discourage levirate marriage, as may be seen from the principle enunciated in the Talmud (Bek. 13a) that the ceremony of חליצה (taking off the shoe of the brother of the deceased) is preferable to the observance of the levirate marriage. The entire subject is treated in great detail in the talmudic tractate Yebamot.

5. *dwell together*] Namely on one estate, otherwise the law, whose chief purpose was evidently to prevent the breaking up of the family estate, was not binding.

*child*] viz. of either sex, so בן is rendered by the Septuagint (comp. also Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV.8.23), Vulgate, rabbinic commentaries, etc. This interpretation is supported by the consideration that in case of the absence of a son, a daughter was permitted to inherit her father (Num. 27.1 ff.). Nevertheless, the fact remains that בן generally denotes "son," and consequently it is taken in this sense also here by Targum, Knobel, Ewald, Dillmann, Driver, etc.

*abroad*] i. e. outside of the family or clan.

*unto one not of his kin*] Literally "to a strange man," i. e. one of another family or clan.

*husband's brother*] אָבִי is a technical term of uncertain origin, employed only in this law.

shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and per-  
 6 form the duty of a husband's brother unto her. And it  
 shall be, that the first-born that she beareth shall suc-  
 ceed in the name of his brother that is dead, that his  
 7 name be not blotted out of Israel. And if the man like  
 not to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall  
 go up to the gate unto the elders, and say: 'My husband's  
 brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in  
 Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother  
 8 unto me.' Then the elders of his city shall call him, and  
 speak unto him; and if he stand, and say: 'I like not to  
 9 take her'; then shall his brother's wife draw nigh unto

*perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her]* יָבָם is a denomina-  
 tive Pi'el of יָבַם; and signifies "to act as a *yabam*." The fact that the  
 Hebrew has a special word to indicate this particular relation is evidence  
 that it must have been a prominent factor in ancient Hebrew society,  
 and that the rights and duties connected with it must have been im-  
 portant ones (Driver).

6. *shall succeed in the name of his brother, etc.]* i. e. shall be estab-  
 lished as his heir. Ehrlich renders "shall be accounted to the name of  
 his brother," comp. Gen. 23.17 and 20.

*that his name be not blotted out]* The same expression is found in  
 9.14; 29.19, and elsewhere.

7. *to the gate, etc.]* So that the refusal of her brother-in-law be  
 publicly attested and proclaimed.

8. *the elders of his city]* Who sit in judgment at the gate and are  
 supposed to advise the inhabitants of the city.

*speak unto him]* In order to find out his exact attitude and the  
 motives of his refusal.

*if he stand, and say]* More aptly rendered "if he persist in saying"  
 (Ehrlich).

him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say: 'So shall it be done unto the man that doth not build up his brother's house.' And his name shall be called in 10 Israel The house of him that had his shoe loosed.

When men strive together one with another, and the 11 wife of the one draweth near to deliver her husband out

9. *loose his shoe from off his foot*] Just as putting on a shoe denotes the assumption of supreme power and possession, so taking off a shoe signifies the renunciation of power and possession (comp. Jacob Nacht, "The Symbolism of the Shoe," in *JQR.*, N. S., VI (1915-1916), 1 ff.). According to Ruth 4.7, it was the custom in ancient Israel to confirm all acts of redemption and exchange through the removal of a man's shoe and giving it to his neighbor, who thereby assumed possession of the negotiated property. Here the removal of the shoe from the husband's brother is symbolic of his renunciation of the right he has over his deceased brother's wife.

*spit in his face*] A contemptuous act (comp. Num. 12.14.; Isa. 50.6; Job 30.10), intended to heap discredit and disgrace upon her brother-in-law for his refusal to redeem the name of his deceased brother by marrying the widow. The attempt to construe this act as one of purification, not of contempt, since the rite of חליצה was by no means derogatory (Hirsch), cannot be declared successful, certainly not in the face of the widow's disparaging declaration which follows.

*build up*] For this expression, comp. especially Ruth 4.11, also Gen. 16.2 and 30.3.

10. *The house of him that had his shoe loosed*] Apparently a contemptuous nickname, which will cling to his household or family for ever.

#### 11-12. AGAINST INDECENT ASSAULT.

The case cited here must have been of very rare occurrence, but it is selected as a typical instance of immodest and reckless behavior in women, in order to serve as a standard for the judgment to be pronounced in similar cases. The law is peculiar to Deuteronomy.

11. *When men strive*] So also Ex. 21.22.

of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth  
 12 her hand, and taketh him by the secrets; then thou shalt  
 cut off her hand, thine eye shall have no pity.

13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great  
 14 and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse  
 15 measures, a great and a small. A perfect and just weight  
 shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou

*and taketh him]* i. e. with force (Luzzatto).

*the secrets]* The privates are called קַבְשִׁים because they excite shame,  
 comp. the Latin *pudenda*; Ibn Ezra renders "testicles."

12. *cut off her hand]* This unique punishment corresponds to the  
*lex talionis*, concerning which see 19.21. As a rule bodily mutilation  
 was not resorted to as punishment for a crime in Hebrew legislation,  
 though we find it frequently in other Oriental codes (that of Ham-  
 murabi, for instance).

*thine eye shall have no pity]* So 7.16, etc.

### 13-16. AGAINST DIVERS WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Comp. Lev. 19.35 f.: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment,  
 in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a  
 just *ephah*, and a just *hin*, shall ye have, etc." The standpoint is that  
 justice in commercial transactions is indispensable to the life of the  
 nation and the endurance of the state.

13. *in thy bag]* i. e. a receptacle for stones used as weights, comp.  
 Mic. 6.11 and Prov. 16.11.

*diverse weights]* Literally "a stone and a stone," i. e. stones of  
 different sizes and weights, great and small, as described immediately  
 after. That such dishonest practice existed may be seen from the  
 denunciation of it in later years in Am. 8.5.

14. *diverse measures]* Literally "an *ephah* and an *ephah*," the same  
 idiom as above, amplified by "great and small." The *ephah* is used  
 here for "measure" generally, because it was the most common and  
 standard Hebrew measure. It served both as a dry and liquid measure,  
 and its actual size is calculated to have been 8.005 gallons.

15. *A perfect and just weight]* The Hebrew construction is peculiar:

have; that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, 16 even all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye 17 came forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, 18 and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were enfeebled

"a perfect stone and of righteousness"; on this collocation comp. GKC., § 131. As to the phrase itself and its antonym, comp. Prov. 11.1.

*that thy days may be long, etc.*] So 4.40; 5.16, etc.

16. *do unrighteously*] Literally "do unrighteousness." *abomination*] See on 7.25.

#### 17-19. EXTERMINATION OF THE AMALEKITES.

A reminder of the hostility of the Amalekites towards the Israelites: when the latter came out of Egypt and were in a weak condition, the former fell upon them and attempted to exterminate them, and only through the aid of God did Israel escape destruction (Ex. 17.8 ff.). The warning given then by God to blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven is quite naturally repeated here, on their entrance into the promised land.

17. *Remember*] The Hebrew has an infinitive instead of an imperative, as in 24.9, and elsewhere.

*Amalek*] A nomadic Arabian tribe, occupying the wide desert between Sinai on the south and the southern borders of Palestine on the north (the region now known as the wilderness of Tih). The Amalekites are represented as perpetually at feud with the Israelites.

18. *he met thee*] Properly "he chanced upon thee." The same idea is expressed somewhat differently in I Sam. 15.2: "that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt."

*smote the hindmost of thee*] Properly "cut off as a tail" those who, owing to exhaustion and ailment, were compelled to drag behind the main train. *זָנַב*, a privative, is a denominative Pi'el of *זָנַב* "tail"; similarly Josh. 10.19.

*that were enfeebled*] Construing *נַחֲשָׁלִים* as equivalent to *נַחֲלָשִׁים* by



in thy rear, when thou wast faint and weary; and he  
 19 feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy  
 God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round  
 about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee  
 for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out  
 the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt  
 not forget.

metathesis (Ibn Ezra and others). Some commentators associate it with biblical Aramaic *ܫܠܬ* (Dan. 2.40), meaning "beat down, subdue" (in Syriac "to forge a metal") and render "beaten down (by heat or fatigue), over-done, fagged" (Driver and others).

*he feared not God*] Fear of God would have made it incumbent upon the Amalekites to spare those who lagged behind and were unfit for battle. Since they showed no mercy to others, they deserve no mercy themselves.

19. *hath given thee rest*] Comp. 12.10.

*in the land, etc.*] So 15.4.

*thou shalt blot out, etc.*] In the corresponding passage in Ex. 17.14 God states it as His purpose: "I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

*thou shalt not forget*] This is a further emphasis on the command to exterminate the Amalekites. As to the execution of this command, we know that Saul and David carried on a war of extermination against the Amalekites, and though they were not able to wipe them out completely, they must have come very near doing so, for the last mention of the Amalekites occurs in I Chron. 4.43 (in the days of Hezekiah), where it is stated that the remnant of the Amalekites that escaped, and who had continued till that day in mount Seir, were smitten by 500 of the Simeonites, who took possession of their land.

## CHAPTER 26.

This chapter, which deals with liturgical ceremonies to be performed at the presentation of first-fruits and after the triennial distribution of tithes, forms the close of the Deuteronomic Code, exactly as the law of first-fruits forms the close of the so-called Book of the Covenant (Ex. 23.19). A final exhortation reminds the people once more of their close relationship to God and their obligations towards Him.

And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land **26**  
 which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance,  
 and dost possess it, and dwell therein; that thou shalt <sup>2</sup>  
 take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou  
 shalt bring in from thy land that the LORD thy God giveth  
 thee; and thou shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto  
 the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to cause

1-11. THANKSGIVING AT THE PRESENTATION OF  
 FIRST-FRUIT.

This provision is based on Ex. 23.19 and 34.26, where the Israelites are commanded briefly and concisely to bring the choicest first-fruits of their land into the house of the Lord their God. Here the primary purpose seems to be to set forth the prayer of thanksgiving, which is to be recited during the presentation of the first-fruits at the central sanctuary. Hence other details remain obscure, as, for instance, the disposal to be made of the first-fruits. According to 18.4 they belonged to the priests; from our passage two inferences may be drawn: either all of them were the property of the priests, assuming that the feast of the worshiper, on the analogy of 27.7, consisted of a peace-offering; or else part of them belonged to the priests and part was used for the sacred meal (comp. the partitive  $\pi$  in v. 2).

1. *when thou art come, etc.*] Similarly 17.14.

2. *of the first of all the fruit of the ground*] i. e. only part of the first-fruits is to be taken to the central sanctuary, the other part may be eaten at home (so Dillmann and others, who naturally take the preformative of  $\text{מִן־הָאֵשֶׁת}$  as partitive). But since Ex. 23.19 commands that all of the first-fruits is to be brought before God, the Talmud (Men. 84b, comp. also Sifre) interprets the preformative in a different way, namely that not all fruits of the ground are subject to the law of first-fruits, but only the choicest fruits, i. e. those enumerated in 8.8.

*basket*]  $\text{כַּנֵּי$ , of doubtful origin, is some kind of receptacle for products of the soil (in Mishnaic Hebrew it is made of metal) and occurs only in Deuteronomy (26.2, 4; 28.5, 17).

*unto the place, etc.*] Comp. 12.5, etc.  $\text{מָקוֹם}$ , like the Arabic *makam*, is not any casual place, but a holy place, sanctified through the circumstance that God located His name there.

- 3 His name to dwell there. And thou shalt come unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him: 'I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the land which the LORD swore unto our fathers to  
4 give us.' And the priest shall take the basket out of thy hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy  
5 God. And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God: 'A wandering Aramean was my father, and he went

3. *the priest*] The singular probably implies the chief priest. According to Ibn Ezra, the reference is to the high priest.

*that shall be in those days*] As in 17.9 and 19.17.

*I profess, etc.*] This is the introduction to the following prayer (5-10), which the Rabbis, owing no doubt to the introductory formula הוֹדוּת, included in the Passover Haggadah.

*thy God*] i. e. the God to whom the priest stands in a special relation of a devoted servant. The Septuagint felt the difficulty in the second person of the pronominal suffix, hence it changed it to the first person. Nevertheless, the masoretic text seems to be authentic, as is evident from I Sam. 15.15, 21, 30; II Kings 19.4; etc. Apparently this was the manner of address.

4. *set it down before the altar*] This act is symbolic of the worshiper's primary intention to offer the first-fruits to God. It is only after this symbolical act that the priest may appropriate the first-fruits for himself.

5. *A wandering Aramean*] Some, like Ibn Ezra, render "impoverished" (comp. Prov. 31.6 and Job 29.13), others interpret "lost" (like a straying sheep, see Jer. 50.6; Ezek. 34.4, 16; Ps. 119.176), all going back to the primary meaning "perishing." The reference is to Jacob, whose ties to Aram-naharaim were very close: his mother's home was there (Gen., chapter 24), and he himself served there many years for Laban's two daughters (ibid., chapters 29-31). Another view is that the reference is to Abraham, who was born and reared in Aram-naharaim (RSbM). Finally, some refer it to Laban the Aramean (comp. Gen. 25.20; 28.5; 31.20, 24) and construe the verb as transitive: "wished to annihilate my father" (the Targumim, the Passover Haggadah, and perhaps also the Masorites who separate אֲרָמִי from אֲבִי).

down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians dealt ill with us and afflicted us, and 6 laid upon us hard bondage. And we cried unto the LORD, the 7 God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression. And 8 the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And He 9 hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, 10 behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the land, which Thou, O LORD, hast given me.' And thou shalt set it down before the LORD thy God, and worship before the

and connect it with the following אָבִי). Perhaps this traditional view did not take the verb as a participle of the Kal, but rather as a perfect of the rare Po'el conjugation (Wolf Heidenheim in Meklenburg's Commentary ad loc.).

*few in number*] Comp. 10.22. For a similar expression see Gen. 34.30.

*great, mighty, and populous*] So Ex. 1.9.

6. *dealt ill with us*] Comp. Num. 20.15.

*afflicted us*] Comp. Ex. 1.12.

*hard bondage*] Comp. Ex. 1.14; 6.9.

7. *we cried unto the Lord, etc.*] See Num. 20.16.

*saw our affliction, etc.*] See Ex. 3.9.

8. *with a mighty hand, etc.*] See 4.34.

9. *into this place*] See 1.31; 9.7; 11.5.

*a land flowing with milk and honey*] Similarly 6.3, etc.

10. *thou shalt set it down, etc.*] According to v. 4 the priest, not the worshiper, is to set the basket down before the altar. Hence the Septuagint renders here differently, "thou shalt leave it" (namely the basket), so also Ehrlich. It is quite evident that the suffix of the verb refers to the basket of v. 4, not to the first-fruit.

- 11 LORD thy God. And thou shalt rejoice in all the good which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is in the midst of thee.
- 12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithe of thine increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within thy
- 13 gates, and be satisfied, then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God: 'I have put away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow,

*worship*] Namely performing the rite of the preceding verses (4-10).

11. *thou shalt rejoice, etc.*] The allusion is to a joyful feast held at the sanctuary, in which the poor Levite and the stranger are invited to participate (comp. 16.11 and 14).

#### 12-15. PRAYER AFTER THE TRIENNIAL DISTRIBUTION OF TITHES.

According to 14.28 f. the tithe of the third year was devoted for charitable purposes in the Israelite's native place. Here the distributor of the tithe is enjoined to offer a prayer after the proper distribution of that tithe.

12. *When thou hast made an end of tithing, etc.*] According to the Rabbis, this tithing was accomplished about the feast of Passover, and the confession was therefore fixed for the last day of Passover (Sifre). *the year of tithing*] i. e. of tithing the tithe of the poor.

*hast given it unto the Levite, etc.*] In accordance with 14.28 f.

13. *before the Lord*] This implies that the prayer is to be recited at the sanctuary, during the pilgrimage following the distribution of the tithe.

*I have put away*] Literally "consumed, destroyed," comp. 13.6; used here in the sense of a total removal from the house.

*the hallowed things*] i. e. the tithe which is consecrated to God.

according to all Thy commandment which Thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed any of Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not <sup>14</sup> eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I put away thereof, being unclean, nor given thereof for the dead; I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, I have done according to all that Thou hast commanded me. Look forth from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and <sup>15</sup>

*hast commanded me*] See 14.29.

**14.** *in my mourning*] As in Hos. 9.4. The rule was that a mourner was unclean through contact with the dead body (comp. Num. 19.11 and 14), and as such he was not allowed to touch anything that was holy; hence if he ate of the tithe, which was holy, he defiled it.

*have I put away thereof, being unclean*] While removing the tithe from his house, as required in the preceding verse, he was careful not to be unclean from any cause whatsoever, aside from contact with a corpse. כִּטְמָא "as one unclean" is an unusual construction in Hebrew, but comp. Isa. 40.10 כִּחְזֹק "as a Mighty One."

*given thereof for the dead*] The reference is most likely to the custom among the friends of a deceased person of sending victuals to the house of mourning for the refreshment of the mourners (comp. II Sam. 3.35; Jer. 16.7; Ezek. 24.17); such food is naturally unclean, hence the tithe is not to be employed for that purpose (Knobel, Keil, Ewald). Another view is that the word מֵתִים denotes "to the dead", hence the allusion is to the practice current among ancient nations of placing food in the grave with the dead, for the consumption of the departed spirit (Dillmann, Oort, Wellhausen). However, such a custom, common among the Egyptians, is not otherwise attested in the Scriptures. A further view is that the word signifies "for the needs of the dead," i. e. for a casket and shrouds (Sifre).

**15.** After stating his part in fulfilling God's commandment with reference to the tithe, the worshiper closes with a prayer for God's blessing upon the land and the people dwelling upon it.

*Look forth*] Similarly Ps. 14.2 and 102.20.

*from Thy holy habitation*] The same phrase is found also in Jer. 25.30; Zech. 2.17; Ps. 68.6; II Chron. 30.27.

bless Thy people Israel, and the land which Thou hast given us, as Thou didst swear unto our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

- 16 This day the LORD thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and ordinances; thou shalt therefore observe  
 17 and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and that thou wouldest walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and hearken  
 18 unto His voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His own treasure, as He hath promised thee,  
 19 and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments; and to make thee high above all nations that He hath

*Thou didst swear]* Comp. 1.8.  
*a land flowing, etc.]* As above v. 9.

#### 16-19. CLOSING EXHORTATION.

16. *This day]* Comp. 4.8; 5.1, etc.  
*these statutes and ordinances]* Namely those contained in chapters 12-26. Comp. the same expression at the beginning of chapter 12.

*observe and do them]* So 4.6.  
*with all thy heart, etc.]* Comp. 6.5.

17. *Thou hast avouched]* Literally "thou hast caused the Lord to say" (Judah Halevi quoted by Ibn Ezra, Gesenius, Ewald, and others). The Hiph'il form of אָוַח occurs only here and in the next verse. Another rendering is "hast set apart" (Rashi), or "hast chosen" (Septuagint, Vulgate, Targum, RMbN).

*to be thy God, etc.]* These are the terms of the covenant concluded between God and Israel.

18. *His own treasure]* See on 7.6.

*keep all His commandments]* This is an absolute condition for becoming God's chosen people.

19. *to make thee high, etc.]* So 28.1.

made, in praise, and in name, and in glory; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the LORD thy God, as He hath spoken.

And Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the 27 people, saying: 'Keep all the commandment which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye 2

*made*] i. e. created, so also Ps. 86.9.

*in praise, and in name, and in glory*] i. e. as an object of pride and renown to God (Sforno, Driver); similarly Jer. 13.11.

*a holy people*] So 7.6; 14.2, 21; 28.9.

## CHAPTER 27.

### RATIFICATION AND SYMBOLICAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE DEUTERONOMIC CODE BY THE ISRAELITES.

This chapter, which seems to interrupt Moses' discourse, does not articulate very well with the preceding nor with the following chapter. Its proper place would seem to be after chapter 28, which forms a good connection with the close of chapter 26 and like it constitutes a concluding exhortation to the Israelites to observe their covenant with God. It may be observed also that this chapter is couched chiefly in the third person.

### 1-8. INSCRIPTION OF THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW ON STONES.

1. *the elders of Israel*] Moses associates here the elders with him for the reason that they will be present at the passage of the Jordan, and in his absence it will devolve upon them to see that his command is fulfilled (Sforno).

*Keep*] The Hebrew has the infinitive, as in 5.12; 16.1, etc.

*all the commandment*] i. e. all the laws of Deuteronomy, as in 8.1.

2. *on the day, etc.*] The definite article implies "on the very day" on which they were to cross the Jordan, not generally "in the time when."



shall pass over the Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great  
 3 stones, and plaster them with plaster. And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art

*great stones*] i. e. stones of a large size, on which much could be inscribed. The number of stones is not indicated. To assume that they are identical with the twelve stones set up by Joshua (4.3) as a memorial on crossing the Jordan (Meklenburg, Hirsch) is quite arbitrary and without foundation, since these stones served a different purpose and apparently were uninscribed.

*plaster them with plaster*] שִׁיר is lime or gypsum with which the stone is coated in order to make the writing on it distinct and legible. Apparently the letters were not to be engraved in the stone, as was usually the case in ancient inscriptions, but to be written with a stylus and some pigment on a prepared surface. This mode of inscribing was current in Egypt, where it was favored by the climate. In Palestine, on the other hand, the winter climate was bound to be injurious to such kind of writing. Incidentally, the fact that the Israelites employed this mode of writing proves the antiquity of this passage, that it actually goes back to the period of the exodus from Egypt. The practice of engraving laws upon stones and setting them up in a public place was quite common in antiquity. The Code of Hammurabi of the beginning of the second millennium B. C. E. was engraved on a pillar of black diorite in about 49 columns, 4000 lines and 8000 words. The much later regulations for sacrifices at Carthage were likewise carved on stone. Many laws and decrees of ancient Athens and other Greek states were also engraved on slabs of stone.

3. *all the words of this law*] i. e. of the Deuteronomic Code (chapters 5-26), comp. comment on 1.5. Other views are that the reference is to the entire Pentateuch (comp. RMbN ad loc.), or to the 613 precepts supposed to be contained in the Pentateuch (Mishna Sotah 7.5), or only to the following blessings and curses (Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV.8.44; so also Ehrlich).

*when thou art passed over*] i. e. immediately after crossing the Jordan, which is in agreement with "on the very day" of the preceding verse. Apparently only the writing on the stones was to be executed immediately upon the crossing of the Jordan; the setting up of the inscribed

passed over; that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of thy fathers, hath promised thee. And it shall be when ye are passed over <sup>4</sup> the Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. And there shalt thou build an altar <sup>5</sup>

stones on mount Ebal, which is situated at an approximate distance of 20 miles from the Jordan, had to be deferred for some time. However, Josh. 8.32 represents both acts as taking place at the same time.

*that thou mayest go in, etc.*] Clearly the occupation of Canaan is represented as lying in the future.

4. *when ye are passed over*] Here, as in the preceding verse, the crossing of the Jordan is regarded as past, only here it is not immediately, but some time after the crossing; comp. above on v. 3.

*in mount Ebal*] Situated in the vicinity of Shechem, see on 11.29. The Samaritan version of the Pentateuch has Gerizim, the sacred mountain of the Samaritans, instead of Ebal, which is admittedly an arbitrary alteration of the Hebrew text.

*plaster them with plaster*] An unnecessary repetition of the close of v. 2. Anyway, the plastering was to be done before the inscribing, as an aid to clarity and legibility, not after the inscribing, when the effect of plastering might be to wipe out the inscription. The phrase might have crept in here by mistake from v. 2. Luzzatto explains it as a relative clause meaning "which you had plastered with plaster," but this is hardly justified by Hebrew syntax.

5. *there*] i. e. on mount Ebal.

*an altar*] viz. for sacrifice and worship. Such an altar was erected by Joshua (8.30 f.). Since the erection of an altar on mount Ebal is not compatible with the notion of one central place of worship, conceived to be the aim of Deuteronomy, critics of the Pentateuch see themselves compelled to assign this section to a different source, namely the Elohist source, with which the provisions for the altar seem to agree (comp. Ex. 20.24 ff.). However, far from being a foreign element, this passage serves to prove the contention of some recent commentators on Deuteronomy, such as Adam C. Welch (*The Code of Deuteronomy*, pp. 179 and 184; comp. also his *Deuteronomy, The Framework*

unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt  
 6 lift up no iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar  
 of the LORD thy God of unhewn stones; and thou shalt  
 offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God.  
 7 And thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and shalt eat  
 8 there; and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God. And  
 thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law  
 very plainly.'

*of the Code*, pp. 55 f.), that centralization of the cult was not at all the purport of that book, and that consequently it belongs to an early period of Israel's history when there were more than one central sanctuary.

*lift up no iron tool upon them*] This is in agreement with Ex. 20.25, according to which a stone altar must be built of whole or unhewn stones, upon which no tool has been used.

6. *of unhewn stones*] The Hebrew has "whole stones," in apposition with the following "altar," which in English is best expressed by "of" (GKC., § 117hh).

*burnt-offerings*] See on 12.6.

7. *peace-offerings*] Also termed "sacrifices" in general, comp. 12.6, 11, 27.

*eat there*] Comp. 12.7. Peace-offerings were always accompanied by sacrificial meals, of which the offerer and his family partook.

*rejoice*] This sacrifice and the meal accompanying it are to commemorate the conclusion of the covenant between God and Israel as on the first occasion on mount Sinai (Ex. 24.5, 11), hence the rejoicing and merry-making.

8. *And thou shalt write, etc.*] A repetition of v. 3, probably for the purpose of emphasizing the chief object of this paragraph, namely inscribing the laws on the stones, after the interruption caused by the altar (vv. 5-7).

*the stones*] i. e. the stones mentioned in vv. 2 and 4, not the stones of the altar in v. 5.

*all the words of this law*] See above on v. 3.

*very plainly*] The Hebrew employs here, as in 9.21, two absolute infinitives in an adverbial sense. On the term באר comp. 1.5.

And Moses and the priests the Levites spoke unto all 9  
Israel, saying: 'Keep silence, and hear, O Israel; this day  
thou art become a people unto the LORD thy God. Thou 10  
shalt therefore hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God,  
and do His commandments and His statutes, which I com-  
mand thee this day.'

And Moses charged the people the same day, saying: 11

9-10. A REMINDER OF THE DUTIES IMPOSED UPON ISRAEL  
AS GOD'S PEOPLE.

These two verses, which do not suit very well here, are generally considered a link which originally connected chapter 26 with chapter 28.

9. *the priests the Levites*] See on 18.1. Moses himself is speaking, but he associates with him the priests, as he did the elders in v. 1, merely as living witnesses and participants in the following ceremony.

*Keep silence*] שָׁקֵט is a hapax legomenon, the meaning of which is vouched for in Arabic.

*hear, O Israel*] So 5.1.

*this day, etc.*] Comp. 26.18.

*thou art become*] The Niph'al of הָיָה is used elsewhere only in the sense of "be brought about" (of an event).

10. *His commandments, etc.*] Comp. 4.40; 6.2; 10.13, etc.

11-26. RATIFICATION OF THE DEUTERONOMIC CODE BY  
THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

This provision harks back to 11.26 ff., where a blessing is promised for obeying God's commandments and a curse for disobeying them, the blessing being set upon mount Gerizim and the curse upon mount Ebal. Here a more detailed description of the ceremony is given, including a commination liturgy solemnly pronounced by the Levites in the presence of the twelve tribes, six of which are stationed on mount Gerizim and six on mount Ebal.

11. *the same day*] Properly "on that day," i. e. the day mentioned in v. 9, which is the same as in 26.18, the day of the conclusion of the covenant in the wilderness of Moab.

- 12 'These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are passed over the Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin;  
 13 and these shall stand upon mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.  
 14 And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice:

12. *mount Gerizim*] For its location see on 11.29.

*to bless the people*] Not necessarily themselves, but through their representatives, the priests. According to Rashi (following Sotah 32a), six tribes ascended the peak of mount Gerizim and six the peak of mount Ebal, while "the priests the Levites," accompanied by the ark, stood below between the two mountains; the latter turned their faces first towards mount Gerizim and pronounced the blessings, and all the people (i. e. all the twelve tribes) said "Amen," then they turned their faces towards mount Ebal and pronounced the curses, and again all the people said "Amen." Ehrlich even claims that the subject of "bless" is not the six tribes, but "the priests the Levites" of v. 14. Thus there is no contradiction between v. 12 and v. 14 as assumed by critics of the Pentateuch.

*when ye are passed*] See above on v. 4.

*Simeon, etc.*] The sons of Jacob's legitimate wives, Leah and Rachel, are chosen for the blessing, while the sons of his two concubines, Zilpah and Bilhah, are chosen for the curse, with the addition of Reuben (the oldest son of Leah, who forfeited his birthright, Gen. 49.4) and Zebulun (the youngest son of Leah) to equalize the numbers on the two sides. The tribe of Levi mentioned in the first group evidently has reference to the worldly Levites not engaged in sacred service at the sanctuary, hence it can have no relation whatever with the priestly Levites in v. 14. For the manner in which these instructions were carried out comp. Josh. 8.33 ff.

14. *the Levites*] i. e. the priestly Levites, who were wont to conduct the liturgical services at the sanctuary.

*unto all the men of Israel*] This clearly shows that all the twelve tribes participated in the entire service, not, as is sometimes maintained, that six tribes took part in the blessing only and six in the curse only.

Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten <sup>15</sup> image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and setteth it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say: Amen.

15-26. Here follows the commination liturgy comprising twelve imprecations against twelve typical transgressions, all of which are mentioned elsewhere in the Pentateuch (six in the Book of the Covenant in Exodus, nine in the Law of Holiness in Leviticus, seven in other parts of Deuteronomy). It is difficult to see why just these offences have been singled out for condemnation, except perhaps for the reason, which has often been expressed, that they are mostly secret transgressions liable to escape human judgment or punishment by an earthly court. A much more difficult problem is the circumstance that in this liturgy only curses are pronounced, whereas from v. 12 we are to expect also blessings corresponding to the curses. Jewish tradition is forced to the assumption that every one of the twelve curses was preceded implicitly by a corresponding blessing (Talmud, Rashi, etc.), or that the first and last curses only were preceded by blessings (Targum Yerushalmi). Ibn Ezra takes a more rational stand by declaring that the blessing and cursing of vv. 12-13 have reference to chapter 28, where both are listed, and that the imprecations of vv. 15-26 under discussion are specially designed for secret sins and need not be taken as implying corresponding blessings. This view almost coincides with the modern critical theory, according to which our passage is in reality not the work of the author of Deuteronomy, but constitutes an old liturgical office, used on solemn occasions, which has been inserted by a later hand in the text of Deuteronomy, and accommodated to its position there by the addition or adaptation of v. 26 (Driver).

15. *Cursed*] אָרוּר, a fixed formula of imprecation, just as בָּרוּךְ is a fixed formula of benediction.

*a graven or molten image*] The former is forbidden in the Decalogue (Ex. 20.4 = Deut. 5.8), the latter in Ex. 34.17.

*abomination*] Comp. 7.25.

*the work of the hands of the craftsman*] So Jer. 10.3, comp. above 4.28, "the work of men's hands."

*in secret*] In order to be able to worship it undetected ('Ab. Zarah 52a).

*Amen*] This is an adjective meaning "firm, assured," and is employed adverbially in the sense of "verily, truly" in early books of the

- 16 Cursed be he that dishonoureth his father or his mother.  
And all the people shall say: Amen.
- 17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark.  
And all the people shall say: Amen.
- 18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to go astray in the  
way. And all the people shall say: Amen.
- 19 Cursed be he that perverteth the justice due to the  
stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall  
say: Amen.
- 20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because  
he hath uncovered his father's skirt. And all the people  
shall say: Amen.
- 21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And  
all the people shall say: Amen.

Bible, comp. I Kings, 1.36; Jer. 11.5, etc. It was used particularly as a solemn liturgical formula, as here, Num. 5.22, and in the doxologies of the Book of Psalms. Here the word uttered by the people in unison is meant to confirm the imprecation pronounced by the Levitical priests.

16. *dishonoureth*] This expression, though not so strong as "curseth" of Ex. 21.17 and Lev. 20.9, is the exact opposite of "honour" in the fifth commandment of the Decalogue. This is likewise a secret sin, since the parents refrain from proclaiming it to the world.

17. *removeth his neighbour's landmark*] Thus violating the tenth commandment of the Decalogue. The removal of a neighbor's landmark is also explicitly prohibited in 19.14.

18. *maketh the blind to go astray*] Comp. Lev. 19.14, "nor put a stumbling-block before the blind."

19. *perverteth the justice, etc.*] An act prohibited above 24.17, also in Ex. 22.20 ff.; 23.9; Lev. 19.33 ff.

20. *lieth with his father's wife*] Comp. 23.1, also Lev. 18.8 and 20.11, where death is the penalty for incest with a step-mother.

*uncovered his father's skirt*] On this peculiar expression comp. 23.1.

21. *lieth with any manner of beast*] Comp. Ex. 22.18; Lev. 18.23; 20.15, where death is the penalty for the heinous offence of sodomy.

Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of 22  
his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the  
people shall say: Amen.

Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law. And all 23  
the people shall say: Amen.

Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour in secret. And 24  
all the people shall say: Amen.

Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent 25  
person. And all the people shall say: Amen.

22. *lieth with his sister, etc.*] Comp. Lev. 18.9 and 20.17, where incest with a half-sister is punishable by death.

23. *lieth with his mother-in-law*] Comp. Lev. 18.17 and 20.14, where incest with a mother-in-law is punishable by burning.

24. *smieth his neighbour*] i. e. murders him, hence violates the sixth commandment of the Decalogue (Ex. 20.13 = Deut. 5.17). In Ex. 21.12 and Lev. 24.17 this offence is punishable by death (*lex talionis*). Some commentators interpret this phrase as meaning calumny or defamation of character, which to them is similar to murder, for the calumniator murders his neighbor's honor, happiness and peace (Targum Yerushalmi, Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer chapter 53, Rashi). *in secret*] So that the murderer remains undetected.

25. *taketh a bribe, etc.*] According to many exegetes, the reference is to a corrupt judge, but Ibn Ezra is of the opinion that a false witness is meant here. Ehrlich renders the phrase as follows: "he who taketh a bribe in favor of a case involving the murder of an innocent person." Receiving of bribes is forbidden in 16.19 and Ex. 23.8, though not with reference to the particular case mentioned here. A striking analogy may be found between this passage and Ezek. 22.12, "In thee have they taken gifts (or bribes) to shed blood."

*to slay an innocent person*] Literally "to smite a soul (as, for instance, 19.6; Num. 35.15, etc.), innocent blood," the two nouns being in apposition, comp. the phrase "the blood is the life" in 12.23.



26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say: Amen.'

28 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that

26. *confirmeth not the words of this law*] The last of the twelve imprecations is general in nature and is invoked for him who fails to observe any of the laws of the Torah (Sotah 37a, Rashi), or the Deuteronomic Code (Driver et al.), or who commits any of the offences enumerated above. קִים means literally "causeth to stand up". i. e. puts on a firm and effective basis; similarly II Kings 23.3 and 24.

*to do them*] From this Ibn Ezra infers that the reference is to the positive commandments (מצוות עשה) as distinguished from the negative commandments or prohibitions (מצוות לא תעשה).

## CHAPTER 28.

### DECLARATION OF THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES WHICH WILL ACCOMPANY THE OBSERVANCE OR NEGLECT OF THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW.

Just as the Book of the Covenant closes with a blessing for observing God's commandments (Ex. 23.20 ff.) and the Law of Holiness ends with blessings in case of obedience and curses in case of disobedience to God (Lev., chapter 26), so also the Deuteronomic Code winds up with a series of blessings (vv. 1-14) and an increased number of curses (vv. 15-68) as a solemn warning to Israel to keep God's commandments for its own good.

#### 1-14. BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE.

Of a similar nature are 7.12 ff.; 11.13 ff., 22 ff.

1. *And it shall come to pass, etc.*] As stated above, these words do not articulate with 27.11-26 and were probably in close connection with 27.9-10.

*hearken diligently*] So 11.13; 15.5.

the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come <sup>2</sup> upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in <sup>3</sup> the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed <sup>4</sup> shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the young of thy flock. Blessed shall be thy basket and <sup>5</sup> thy kneading-trough. Blessed shalt thou be when thou <sup>6</sup>

*will set thee on high, etc.*] Similarly 26.19.

2. *overtake thee*] The blessings, like the curses (see below vv. 15 and 45), are pictured as living beings pursuing their objects (Driver).

*if thou shalt hearken, etc.*] A repetition of v. 1 for emphasis.

3-6. Six general blessings (corresponding to the six tribes on mount Gerizim), each introduced by the formula בָּרוּךְ "blessed." The nature of these blessings is such as to comprise all the endeavors of human life, and the Israelites are promised success in every enterprise upon which they may embark.

3. *in the city*] i. e. where you dwell, or in the place of your commercial pursuits (Ibn Ezra).

*in the field*] i. e. in the place of your agricultural pursuits (Ibn Ezra).

4. *the fruit of thy body, etc.*] Comp. 7.13 on this entire verse. The copious blessing given here covers the most precious possessions of man, the things that in the ancient East made one very powerful and highly respected.

5. *thy basket and thy kneading-trough*] i. e. the vessels used for garnering the products of the soil. The point of this blessing is that not only shall the produce prosper in the field, but it shall also be well preserved at home and saved from decay after it had been placed in receptacles.

*basket*] Comp. on 26.2.

*kneading-trough*] כִּשְׂמֹרֶת, of unknown origin, occurs also below v. 17; Ex. 7.28 and 12.34.

- comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.
- 7 The LORD will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee; they shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. The LORD will command the blessing with thee in thy barns, and in all that thou putttest thy hand unto; and He will bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
- 9 The LORD will establish thee for a holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee; if thou shalt keep the

6. *when thou comest in, etc.*] i. e. at the beginning and close of an enterprise, whatever it may be (Ibn Ezra), comp. 31.2; Josh. 14.11; I Kings 3.7, etc. According to an aggadic passage in the Talmud (B. M. 107a), the meaning is as follows: "May your exit from the world be like your entry into it: just as the latter was without sin, so be the former without sin."

7ff. The blessings expressed compactly in vv. 3-6 are now expanded to include specific cases. Naturally, the most important promise to the Israelites in their present condition is complete victory over their enemies.

7. *smitten before thee*] Comp. 1.42, and elsewhere.

*one way . . . seven ways*] The enemy advances in compact formation, in one solid phalanx, but when he is routed and thrown into confusion he flees in all directions to save his shattered army. Number seven is a round number, denoting "many."

8. *will command*] The Hebrew employs the jussive, which expresses urgency and eagerness on the part of the speaker for the desired act; similarly vv. 21 and 36.

*with thee*] i. e. accompanying thee.

*thy barns*] The word בִּמְכָר is rare, occurring only here and in Prov. 3.10.

*in all that thou putttest thy hand unto*] So 12.7. This verse contains a promise of material welfare in the promised land.

9. *a holy people*] As promised in 26.19, comp. also 7.6 and 14.2.

*hath sworn unto thee*] The reference is probably to Ex. 19.4 ff., though no oath is mentioned there.

commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in His ways. And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the LORD is called upon thee; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD will make thee overabundant for good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD will open unto thee His good treasure the heaven to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD will make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be

10. *the name of the Lord is called upon thee*] i. e. you are the property of God and consequently are under His protection.

*they shall be afraid of thee*] Hence they will refrain from attacking you, and you will be left in peace.

11. The consequence of peace will be a superfluity of wealth and possessions, particularly abundant offspring.

*for good*] i. e. for prosperity, so also 30.9.

12. Prosperity will come not through hard labor (as in Egypt, comp. 11.10), but through God's supervision and care in sending rain from heaven in season.

*His good treasure*] The rain is conceived in the Bible as being stored up in reservoirs in heaven, which are opened from time to time to pour it out upon the earth (comp. Gen. 7.11 and 8.2; also Job 38.22).

*to give the rain, etc.*] Comp. 11.14, also Lev. 26.4.

*to bless all the work of thy hand*] With special reference to agricultural pursuits.

*thou shalt lend, etc.*] Abundance of produce spells abundance of wealth in general, the surplus of which is lent to others. Similarly 15.6.

13. *the head, and not the tail*] i. e. the head or leader of all the

above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if thou shalt hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do  
 14 them; and shalt not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and  
 16 overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and  
 17 cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy  
 18 basket and thy kneading-trough. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase  
 19 of thy kine, and the young of thy flock. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be

nations instead of the follower of any of them (RMbN). On the figure of speech, comp. Isa. 9.13 f. and 19.15.

*above only, etc.*] i. e. victorious and all-powerful forever.

14. *turn aside, etc.*] Comp. 5.29.

#### 15-68. CURSES FOR DISOBEDIENCE.

Comp. 4.25 ff.; 8.19 f.; and 11.16 f., where a curse in general is pronounced against those who turn aside from God and serve idols.

15. Introductory clause, agreeing in the main with v. 1 f., except for the negative, the addition of "statutes" on the side of "commandments," and the omission of two subordinate clauses.

16-19. Six general curses (corresponding to the six tribes on mount Ebal), each introduced by the formula ארור "cursed," analogous to the six general blessings in vv. 3-6. Comp. the comments *ibid.*

18. Here "and the fruit of thy cattle" of v. 4 is omitted, probably because it is included in the following phrase, "the increase of thy kine."

when thou goest out. The LORD will send upon thee 20  
 cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that thou puttest  
 thy hand unto to do, until thou be destroyed, and until  
 thou perish quickly; because of the evil of thy doings,  
 whereby thou hast forsaken Me. The LORD will make the 21  
 pestilence cleave unto thee, until He have consumed thee  
 from off the land, whither thou goest in to possess it.  
 The LORD will smite thee with consumption, and with 22

20ff. After the general curses follow a number of specific imprecations, estimated by the Rabbis to be ninety-eight, double the amount of those in Lev. chapter 26 (Midr. Tanhuma, beginning of *Parashah Nizzabim*).

20. This verse contains the opposite of v. 8.

*discomfiture*] Properly "tumult, confusion," as in 7.23.

*rebuke*] The nominal form מַעֲרִיב occurs only here. Some commentators take it as metathesis for post-biblical מַרְעָה "diminution," in which sense the verb מָעַר appears in Mal. 2.3 (Ibn Janah, s. v.; Hoffmann). In Hebrew these curses appear with the definite article, as if they were personified, comp. on v. 2.

*until thou be destroyed*] Repeated in vv. 24, 45, 51, 61.

*the evil of thy doings*] This phrase is used particularly in prophetic writings. מַעֲלִים, which is the poetical equivalent of מַעֲשִׂים, occurs only here in Deuteronomy.

*Me*] The reference is, of course, to God, not to Moses; see on 7.4.

21. *will make the pestilence cleave unto thee*] The Hebrew aptly employs the jussive, see on v. 8; דָּבַר is a general term for "plague, pestilence," i. e. any epidemic which involves a high mortality or utter extermination. The same curse is found in Lev. 26.25.

22. The general plague is followed by seven specific plagues, all caused by heat, of which the first four affect human beings, while the last three involve the crops.

*with consumption, and with fever*] Both of these plagues are mentioned in Lev. 26.16. שָׁחַת is a wasting disease, phthisis of the ancients (see Preuss, *Biblisch-Talmudische Medizin*, p. 187); קָדַח, derived from a root signifying "be kindled," is a burning fever.

fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with drought, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they  
 23 shall pursue thee until thou perish. And thy heaven that  
 is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under  
 24 thee shall be iron. The LORD will make the rain of thy  
 land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down  
 25 upon thee, until thou be destroyed. The LORD will cause  
 thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out

*with inflammation, and with fiery heat*] Neither of these plagues is found elsewhere, but from their etymologies it is evident that they denote various kinds of fever. According to Ibn Ezra, דלקת is an intense fever lasting three or four days, while the fever קדחת mentioned above lasts only one day. קדחת, a reduplicated stem, derived from a root meaning "be scorched," probably designates a more intense inflammation than any of the preceding plagues: it is characterized by Macalister (in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, s. v. medicine) as erysipelas (a febrile disease accompanied by a diffused inflammation of the skin), though this is not very common in Palestine.

*drought*] חָרֵב, vocalized like the word for "sword", but such meaning is evidently out of place here; it has therefore been construed as חֶרֶב "drought" by most versions and commentators (Samaritan, Vulgate, Saadya, Ibn Ezra, Gesenius, Knobel, Dillmann, et al.). A drought was considered a great calamity in Palestine, comp. 11.17, and elsewhere.

*blasting*] שָׂרִפָּה is the scorching of the grain by the hot and withering East wind, comp. Gen. 41.6, and elsewhere.

*mildew*] יִרְקִין, properly "paleness, lividness," is a blight on the grain likewise caused by the parching East wind. The last two plagues occur also in I Kings 8.37 = II Chron. 6.28; Am. 4.9; Hag. 2.17.

23. *thy heaven, etc.*] Comp. Lev. 26.19: "I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass," i. e. unyielding and unproductive.

24. *powder and dust*] This is with reference to the East wind or Sirocco, which is said by travelers to bring up a rain of dust and sand very destructive to the produce of the soil (comp. Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, II, 123).

25. *The Lord will cause thee, etc.*] An exact reversal of v. 7: utter defeat instead of decisive victory. A similar curse is found in Lev. 26.17.

one way against them, and shalt flee seven ways before them; and thou shalt be a horror unto all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcasses shall be food unto all <sup>26</sup> fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and there shall be none to frighten them away.

The LORD will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and <sup>27</sup> with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the

*a horror*] i. e. an object of horror. וְעוֹרָה, more commonly וּנְעוּרָה, is literally "a shuddering," derived from a root meaning "to shake, tremble"; comp. Isa. 28.19; Jer. 15.4; 24.9, etc.

26. *thy carcasses*] i. e. the carcasses of thy warriors. וְנִבְלָה is collective, as in Isa. 26.19. On the idea in general, comp. Jer. 7.33; 16.4, etc.

*none to frighten them away*] Namely the fowls and beasts that feed upon the carcasses; similarly Lev. 26.6; Isa. 17.2; Jer. 7.33.

27ff. A fresh series of plagues and diseases, loathsome and incurable, with which Israel is to be smitten in case of disobedience.

27. *the boil of Egypt*] Probably some kind of skin disease, prevalent in Egypt (comp. 7.15 and below v. 60), but it is difficult to determine the exact nature of this disease. Etymologically speaking, שָׁחִין is nothing more than "an inflammation" (from a root signifying "be hot or inflamed"). It occurs below v. 35; Ex. 9.9 ff.; Lev. 13.18 ff.; II Kings 20.7 = Isa. 38.21; Job 2.7; and in all these passages it seems to signify some cutaneous eruption of a malignant character. Some commentators identify it with elephantiasis, since this disease is associated with Egypt in classical literature (comp. Driver ad loc.); others think of small-pox, etc.

*emerods*] Ketib עֲפִלִּים (properly "mounds, hills") denotes "swellings, tumors", with special reference to haemorrhoidal swellings in the anus. Dunash ben Tamim of Kairwan, a contemporary of Saadya Gaon, compared it with a similar Arabic word denoting some kind of ailment in the sexual organ of females, probably a hernia or rupture. Macalister (l. c.) claims that the allusion is to the buboes of the bubonic plague. At any rate, it is the same disease with which the Philistines were smitten following their seizure of the ark of the covenant (I Sam. 5.6 ff.; 6.4 f.). The word seems to have been considered by the Masorites obscene and indecent, for they directed the reader to read מַחֲרִים instead, a word which in Syriac denotes "dysentery."

*scab*] גֶּרֶב, mentioned also in Lev. 21.20 and 22.22, is a contagious



28 itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The LORD will smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not make thy ways prosperous; and thou shalt be only oppressed and robbed alway, and there shall be none to save thee. Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her;

eruption consisting of malignant and incurable pustules (*jarab* is mange in Arabic).

*itch*] חרס, derived from a root meaning "to scratch," is likewise an eruptive disease of some kind. Its exact nature is not ascertainable, since the term occurs only here.

28. *madness, etc.*] Three mental ills in addition to the physical diseases mentioned above. The effect of these ills is to paralyze a nation and render it helpless. Comp. the same combination of words in Zech. 12.4, employed to describe a panic seizing horses and horsemen and rendering them helpless in the fray.

*blindness*] Not necessarily physical blindness, but blindness of the spirit, akin to helplessness.

*astonishment of heart*] i. e. confusion of the mind.

29. *thou shalt grope, etc.*] The same figure of speech occurs in Isa. 59.10 and Job 5.14. Here, too, the reference seems to be to mental blindness and spiritual confusion, which render a people weak and helpless.

*thou shalt not make thy ways prosperous*] i. e. your undertakings will be attended not by success, but by failure and disaster.

*oppressed and robbed*] Namely by foreign foes.

30-33. Enumeration of different forms of oppression and robbery.

30. *Thou shalt betroth a wife, etc.*] The same idea is expressed in 20.7.

*shall lie with her*] Ketib שוֹלֵה, a strong term meaning "to violate, ravish", which the Masorites regarded as obscene and substituted the more equivocal word יִשְׁכְּבֶנָּה instead. Similarly Isa. 13.16; Jer. 3.2; Zech. 14.2.

thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein;  
 thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not use the fruit  
 thereof. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and 31  
 thou shalt not eat thereof; thine ass shall be violently  
 taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored  
 to thee; thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies; and  
 thou shalt have none to save thee. Thy sons and thy 32  
 daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine  
 eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day;  
 and there shall be nought in the power of thy hand. The 33  
 fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which  
 thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed  
 and crushed alway; so that thou shalt be mad for the 34

*use the fruit thereof]* See on 20.6.

31. *before thine eyes]* This emphasizes the desperate situation of Israel and its utter helplessness: though the spoliation is going on before the very eyes of the people, they can do nothing to prevent it.

*none to save thee]* As in v. 29.

32. *given unto another people]* i. e. will be carried off into exile and slavery.

*fail with longing]* So also Lam. 4.17.

*nought in the power of thy hand]* An idiomatic expression for the negative "being unable to do anything" or "being helpless", so also Neh. 5.5. The same expression in the positive occurs in Gen. 31.29; Mic. 2.1; Prov. 3.27.

33. *a nation which thou knowest not]* So below v. 36, comp. also 13.7. This is a more forcible expression than "another people" of the preceding verse.

*eat up]* Similarly Lev. 26.16.

*oppressed and crushed]* A variation of "oppressed and robbed" in v. 29. The present combination of words is found also in I Sam. 12.3 f. and Am. 4.1.

34. *thou shalt be mad, etc.]* All the appalling failures and disasters enumerated above will drive you mad.

- 35 sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. The LORD will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, whereof thou canst not be healed, from the sole of thy foot  
 36 unto the crown of thy head. The LORD will bring thee, and thy king whom thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation that thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; and there  
 37 shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword,

35. This verse reverts to v. 27 and may be out of place here.

*in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, etc.*] From this description it is evident that the reference is to joint-leprosy, a species of elephantiasis, which "attacks the joints of the fingers and toes, and afterwards those of the larger limbs, which drop off bone by bone, while the limbs which are affected but do not ulcerate become at last so completely devoid of sensation that portions of them may be burnt, or otherwise injured, without the person being conscious of it" (Driver *ad loc.*, quoting from a Report of Physicians on Leprosy). No doubt this was the disease with which Job was afflicted, for the words of Job 2.7, "smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot even unto his crown," agree in the main with the verse before us. On "boil" see above v. 27.

36. Resumes the series of disasters enumerated in vv. 28-34, capping them with the complete collapse of national existence, the nation and the king being led away into exile.

*will bring*] The Hebrew verb is pointed as a jussive, comp. above on v. 8.

*that thou hast not known*] Comp. above on v. 33.

*and there shalt thou serve, etc.*] Comp. 4.28 and below v. 64. The sojourn in foreign countries inevitably leads to the adoption of foreign gods, either through coercion or the strong impulse of imitation.

37. *an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword*] i.e. an object of gibes and quips on the part of your enemies who contemplate your unexampled fall into disgrace. *שֶׁקֶד*, properly "amazement, horror", is used by the prophets, especially Jeremiah; *קֶשֶׁל* is employed here in the sense of "byword"; *שֶׁנִּיחַ* means literally "sharp (cutting) word", hence "taunt".

among all the peoples whither the LORD shall lead thee away.

Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt 38  
gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. Thou 39  
shalt plant vineyards and dress them, but thou shalt  
neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the  
worm shall eat them. Thou shalt have olive-trees through- 40  
out all thy borders, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with  
the oil; for thine olives shall drop off. Thou shalt beget 41  
sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine; for they

38ff. These verses revert to v. 22 and form a contrast to vv. 8 and 11-13 above.

38. *much seed, etc.*] Comp. Hag. 1.6.

*into the field*] The Hebrew employs an accusative of place (GKC., §.118f).

*shall consume it*] The verb חסל, which occurs only here, means properly "to finish, make an end of", in which sense it is found in Aramaic. From this root apparently is derived חסיל, a species of locust, in I Kings 8.37; Isa. 33.4, and elsewhere.

39. *plant vineyards, etc.*] Similarly Zeph. 1.13.

*gather the grapes*] אגר denotes "gather", the object "grapes" not being expressed in Hebrew.

*the worm*] חלעץ here denotes "a worm or grub that destroys vine-buds, the *convolvulus* of the Romans, the vine-weevil, an insect very injurious to vineyards" (Knobel).

40. *anoint thyself with the oil*] So Mic. 6.15. On the practice of anointing, comp. II Sam. 12.20; 14.2; Ruth 3.3; II Chron. 28.15.

*thine olives*] ית is used both of the olive-tree and its fruit.

41. This verse, stating that Israel's children will go into captivity, interrupts the connection of the context and, moreover, constitutes a repetition of v. 32.

42 shall go into captivity. All thy trees and the fruit of thy land shall the locust possess.

43 The stranger that is in the midst of thee shall mount up above thee higher and higher; and thou shalt come down  
44 lower and lower. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him; he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the  
45 tail. And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of the LORD

42. *thy trees*] *עץ* is used here collectively.

*the locust*] *צלצל*, hapax legomenon, is apparently a species of locust destructive to trees and crops, but its exact nature and characteristics are not known. To judge from the etymology of the word (*צלל* "tingle, quiver"), the particular insect denoted by it must have been so called on account of the whirring or buzzing sound of its wings.

*possess*] *יָרַשׁ* is of the intensive Piel conjugation, hence properly "get full possession of", i. e. devour. Since this is the only case of the Piel of this verb in the Bible, some commentators prefer to emend it to the Kal *יָרַשׁ*, comp. Isa. 34.11 and Hos. 9.6.

43. *The stranger*] Who generally engages in commerce and is not dependent upon the soil in the same degree as the native.

*shall mount up*] Namely in wealth and power.

*higher and higher, etc.*] This is the reverse of v. 13.

44. *He shall lend to thee, etc.*] You will be compelled to borrow from the stranger in order to procure the necessities of life. This is the reverse of v. 12.

*he shall be the head, etc.*] This is the reverse of v. 13.

45. *all these curses, etc.*] So v. 15, which forms the beginning of the curses. From the similarity of these two verses some commentators conclude that originally the curses consisted only of vv. 15-44, the rest being a later interpolation.

*till thou be destroyed*] So v. 20, etc.

*didst not hearken*] The past tense is used by the speaker from the standpoint of the future, at the time when a catastrophe will have overwhelmed the people and one would naturally be looking back upon its cause,

thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded thee. And they shall be upon thee 46  
for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever;  
because thou didst not serve the LORD thy God with joy- 47  
fulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemy 48  
whom the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

The LORD will bring a nation against thee from far, from 49  
the end of the earth, as the vulture swoopeth down; a

46. *for a sign, etc.*] See on 4.34.

*upon thy seed for ever*] As if the curses were intended for all future generations. There is, however, the possibility of repentance and restoration, as stated in 4.29 ff. and especially in 30.1 ff.

47. *because*] This is the beginning of a condition which finds its conclusion in the following verse. A similar construction is found in 4.37 ff.

*with joyfulness, etc.*] As He deserved to be served for His love and affection to you.

*gladness of heart*] Comp. Isa. 65.14, where also the opposite, sorrow of heart, is found.

48. *thine enemy*] The Hebrew has the plural, but the suffix of the following verb shows that the singular was meant (so also Vulgate); comp. further vv. 53, 55, and 57, all of which support the singular.

*a yoke of iron*] So Jer. 28.14.

49. *from far, from the end of the earth*] So Isa. 5.26, with reference to the formidable Assyrians, comp. also Jer. 5.15.

*as the vulture swoopeth down*] An apocopated phrase, the meaning being "who will swoop down as the vulture swoopeth down", when it descries its prey from afar. As to the figure of speech, which is very vivid and striking, comp. Jer. 48.40 and 49.22, with reference to the Chaldeans; see also Hos. 8.1; Hab. 1.8; Job 9.26. On the rendering "vulture" for נֶשֶׁר, see on 14.12.

- 50 nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation  
 of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of  
 51 the old, nor show favour to the young. And he shall eat  
 the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy ground, until  
 thou be destroyed; that also shall not leave thee corn, wine,  
 or oil, the increase of thy kine, or the young of thy flock,  
 52 until he have caused thee to perish. And he shall besiege  
 thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fortified walls  
 come down, wherein thou didst trust, throughout all thy  
 land; and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout  
 all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.  
 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh

*whose tongue thou shalt not understand*] So Jer. 5.15, similarly Isa. 28.11 and 33.19 in different words. Though the Assyrians and Babylonians spoke a Semitic tongue closely related to Hebrew, yet it was not intelligible to the Israelites.

50. *of fierce countenance*] Properly "of strong countenance", i. e. unyielding, unmerciful, defiant; so Dan. 8.23.

*that shall not regard, etc.*] As such a cruel nation the Medes are characterized in Isa. 13.18 and the Chaldeans *ibid.* 47.6; Lam. 4.16 and 5.12 f.

51. *he shall eat, etc.*] Similarly Jer. 5.17. The several expressions are the same as above, vv. 4 and 20, comp. also 7.13.

52. *gates*] i. e. cities, comp. on 12.12.

*come down*] i. e. are reduced through siege, similarly 20.20.

*wherein thou didst trust*] So Jer. 5.17.

*and he shall besiege thee, etc.*] Repetition of the first part of the verse, probably for emphasis. Some commentators view it as referring especially to the land which God had given to Israel (König). The people should not expect that a land given to them by God cannot be taken away from them: This hope is as groundless as that placed in the impregnability of the walls of their cities.

*hath given thee*] Perfect instead of participle, as in vv. 45, 47, etc.

53. *And thou shalt eat, etc.*] So Lev. 26.29; Jer. 19.9; Ezek. 5.10. For an actual instance of this horror, comp. Lam. 2.20 and 4.10.

of thy sons and of thy daughters whom the LORD thy God hath given thee; in the siege and in the straitness, where-  
 with thine enemies shall straiten thee. The man that is 54  
 tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil  
 against his brother, and against the wife of his bosom, and  
 against the remnant of his children whom he hath remain-  
 ing; so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh 55  
 of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing  
 left him; in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine  
 enemy shall straiten thee in all thy gates. The tender and 56  
 delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to  
 set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness

*in the siege and in the straitness, etc.]* This phrase recurs in vv. 55 and 57, and is also found in Jer. 19.9.

54. *tender . . . . and very delicate]* The same phrase is used in Isa. 47.1 of Babylon, which is pictured as a noble woman, living in ease and luxury.

*his eye shall be evil]* i. e. he will look with disfavor, or will grudge, comp. 15.9.

*the wife of his bosom]* So 13.7.

55. *because he hath nothing left him]* Literally "from lack of one's leaving him anything", i. e. because nothing is left to him. The subject of הַשְׁאִיר is implied: "the one who leaves". However, many commentators regard the verb as an infinitive and they vocalize it accordingly הַשְׁאִיר.

56. *The tender and delicate woman]* See above on v. 54.

*who would not adventure, etc.]* Being a noble woman she is accustomed to be carried in a litter or to ride in a carriage.

*to set the sole of her foot]* In Hebrew the verb is post-positive instead of prepositive, as usual, but this inversion is exemplified also in Judg. 9.24; Isa. 42.24 (likewise with the absolute infinitive); 49.6.



and tenderness, her eye shall be evil against the husband of her bosom, and against her son, and against her daughter; and against her after-birth that cometh out from between her feet, and against her children whom she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly; in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall straiten thee in thy gates.

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and awful Name, the LORD thy God; then the

57. *and against her after-birth, etc.*] The expression "her eye shall be evil" of the preceding verse seems to be applied to our verse in a somewhat different sense: in the former she is represented as grudging her husband, her son, and her daughter, a share in the ghastly meal which she is preparing; in the latter she is made to grudge her after-birth, and her children that she may bear during the siege, the motherly treatment and care that she owes them, for in her extreme starvation she eats them secretly (Driver). That this curse was fulfilled both during the pre-exilic and post-exilic periods may be seen from II Kings 6.28 f.; Lam. 4.10; and Josephus, *Jewish War*, VII.21.

*after-birth*] שְׁלִיָּה occurs only here, but it is frequent in the Talmud in the same sense. According to the Targum and Rashi, the word denotes "the smallest, most recently born children".

*in the siege, etc.*] The same refrain as in vv. 53 and 55.

58. *all the words of this law*] So 17.19; 27.3, 8; 29.28; 31.12; 32.46.

*that are written in this book*] Similarly below v. 61; 29.19, 20, 26; 30.10. It is claimed by critics of the Pentateuch that this statement fails to harmonize with 31.9, where Moses is first said to have written the Deuteronomic Law. As Driver puts it, "the expression betrays the fact that Deuteronomy was from the first a written book". But there can be no objection in assuming that our statement anticipates the statement of 31.9, and that the word "written" implies "by Moses".

*glorious and awful*] Comp. 10.17.

*Name*] So Lev. 24.11.

LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. And He will bring back upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast in dread of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will

59. *will make thy plagues wonderful*] i. e. extraordinary and exceptional, virulent and enduring.

*thy plagues*] מַכּוֹתָי, a plural with a singular suffix, comp. GKC., § 91n.

*of long continuance*] נֶאֱמָן properly means "assured", i. e. unfailing (comp. Isa. 33.16; Jer. 15.18).

60. *all the diseases of Egypt*] From which He promised to exempt Israel in case of obedience, see on 7.15. מִכּוֹתָי is an orthographic variant of מַכּוֹתָי, similarly רָצָה for רָעָה in Gen. 47.3.

*they shall cleave*] As in v. 21.

61. *every sickness, and every plague*] So Jer. 6.7.

*the book of this law*] i. e. the Book of Deuteronomy.

*them will the Lord bring*] יָבִיא is an imperfect Hiph'il with suffix, having a sheva instead of *hateph pathah* under the first radical (Ibn Ezra).

*until thou be destroyed*] A favorite refrain, as in vv. 20, 24, 45, 51.

62. *few in number*] So 4.27; comp. also 26.5.

*as the stars of heaven*] See 1.10 and 10.22.

*thou didst not hearken, etc.*] See on v. 45.

63. *rejoiced over you, etc.*] Comp. 30.9 and Jer. 32.41.

rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither  
 64 thou goest in to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor  
 65 thy fathers, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou have no repose, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot; but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and languish-  
 66 ing of soul. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no  
 67 assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say:

*and ye shall be plucked, etc.*] This is the only case of the Niph'al of נִסַּח, which occurs in the Kal in Ps. 52.7; Prov. 2.22 and 15.25.

64. *shall scatter thee, etc.*] So 4.27; Jer. 9.15; Ezek. 22.15; comp. also Lev. 26.33.

*serve other gods, etc.*] So above v. 36 and 4.28.

65. *shalt thou have no repose*] The Hebrew employs a poetic expression found elsewhere only in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

*there shall be no rest, etc.*] So Gen. 8.9, comp. also Lam. 1.3.

*a trembling heart*] i. e. a heart full of fear and anxiety, comp. Lev. 26.36.

*failing of eyes*] Due to deferred hopes and vain expectations of relief, comp. above v. 32; Jer. 14.6; Ps. 69.4, and elsewhere.

*languishing of soul*] Equivalent to "decay of life"; comp. on this expression Lev. 26.16 and I Sam. 2.33.

66. *hang in doubt*] תְּלַאֲחִים, instead of תְּלִיִּים, properly denotes "suspended, hung in the balance", hence in doubt (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

*shalt have no assurance of thy life*] More precisely, you will expect death at any moment. The same phrase is used in Job 24.22 of a sick man who is not expected to recover.

67. *In the morning, etc.*] A poignant phrase depicting the uncertainty of daily existence. According to the Talmud (Sotah 49a), the

'Would it were even!' and at even thou shalt say: 'Would it were morning!' for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. And the LORD shall bring thee back into Egypt in 68 ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee: 'Thou shalt see it no more again'; and there ye shall sell yourselves unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

These are the words of the covenant which the LORD 69

reference is to evening and morning that have passed, the sense being that the suffering people will always yearn for the recent past, since the immediate future will become more and more intolerable. The Targum Yerushalmi, on the other hand, takes the reference to be to the future: the suffering people will yearn for the future because, owing to their misfortune and pain, the hours of the day and of the night will appear inordinately long to them.

*for the fear of thy heart, etc.]* The same thought is expressed in Lev. 26.36 f.

68. *Egypt]* i.e. the dreaded place of bondage, from which God saved you after many trials and dangers, and which you imagined you had left behind you for ever.

*in ships]* i.e. in slave-galleys, to be sold there as slaves.

*by the way, etc.]* Comp. 17.16.

*ye shall sell yourselves, etc.]* i.e. you will even be willing to sell yourselves as slaves to your enemies.

*no man shall buy you]* This is the climax of all humiliations: your reputation will be so bad that your enemies will dread even to buy you as slaves; everybody will shun you as a people accursed of God. According to RMbN and Abravanel, all these humiliations were fulfilled during the Second Commonwealth, particularly during the destruction of the Second Temple.

#### 69. SUBSCRIPTION TO THE DEUTERONOMIC CODE.

*These are the words of the covenant, etc.]* There are various views concerning this verse: Some take it to be a subscription to the legislation of chapters 5-26 and 28 (Jewish commentators, Knobel, Kuenen,

commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

**29** And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them:

Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants,  
 2 and unto all his land; the great trials which thine eyes saw,

Driver, Moore, et al.); others construe it as an introduction to what follows, namely chapters 29–30 (Ewald, Keil, Dillmann, et al); another opinion is to the effect that it is a later editorial note (George Adam Smith). The cogency of the first view is apparent from the fact that the expression “words of the covenant” implies the terms under which the covenant was concluded, and these are specified in the preceding but not in the following chapters of Deuteronomy, which are nothing more than an additional exhortation along general lines.

*Moab*] Comp. on 1.5.

*beside the covenant, etc.*] The original covenant was formulated on mount Sinai or Horeb (comp. 5.2 f.); the present covenant made in Moab was not only a renewal but also an extension of the former covenant, since it contained many new regulations.

CHAPTERS 29–30. SUPPLEMENTARY DISCOURSE.

A FRESH EXHORTATION TO ISRAEL TO ENTER INTO THE NEW COVENANT.

CHAPTER 29.

1–8. AN APPEAL TO ISRAEL TO OBEY THE  
 WORDS OF THE NEW COVENANT.

1. *And Moses called*] So 5.1.

*Ye have seen*] Comp. Josh. 23.3.

*before your eyes*] Comp. 1.30; 4.34.

2. *the great trials, etc.*] See on 4.34.

*which thine eyes saw*] So 4.9; 7.19; 10.21.

the signs and those great wonders; but the LORD hath 3  
 not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and  
 ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty 4  
 years in the wilderness; your clothes are not waxen old  
 upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.  
 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or 5  
 strong drink; that ye might know that I am the LORD  
 your God. And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the 6  
 king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out  
 against us unto battle, and we smote them. And we took 7  
 their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the

3. *hath not given you, etc.*] This verse appears to be parenthetical, since it is not very closely connected with the context. The general meaning seems to be that the marvelous acts of God failed to produce the effect which they were expected to produce on sensible and understanding hearts (Hirsch). Or: owing to your stubbornness and rebellious nature the intention of God to give you a knowing heart was frustrated (Sforzo).

*a heart to know*] The heart being the seat of understanding, see on 4.29.

*eyes . . . ears*] i. e. the organs of moral and spiritual perception, comp. Isa. 6.10, and elsewhere.

4. *I have led you forty years in the wilderness*] So 8.2 and Am. 2.10. As is evident from the following verse, the personal pronoun refers to God, though spoken by Moses, see on 7.4.

*your clothes, etc.*] So 8.4.

5. *Ye have not eaten bread, etc.*] i. e. you have not been fed with ordinary human food, but with the miraculous manna, comp. 8.3.

*that ye might know, etc.*] A stereotyped phrase in the Pentateuch and elsewhere. Ezekiel particularly seems to have been fond of this phrase, for he uses it more than 50 times.

6. *unto this place*] So 1.31; 9.7; 11.5.

*Sihon*] Comp. 2.32 ff.

*Og*] Comp. 3.1 ff.

7. *gave it for an inheritance, etc.*] Comp. 3.12 ff.

Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of  
 8 the Manassites. Observe therefore the words of this  
 covenant, and do them, that ye may make all that ye do  
 to prosper.

9 Ye are standing this day all of you before the LORD  
 your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your  
 10 officers, even all the men of Israel, your little ones, your  
 wives, and thy stranger that is in the midst of thy camp,

8. *Observe . . . . and do*] So 4.6.

*the words of this covenant*] As 28.69.

*that ye may make all that ye do to prosper*] The same expression  
 occurs in I Kings 2.3. The reference is probably to the conquest of  
 Canaan, the immediate undertaking of the Israelites.

#### 9-12. ISRAEL ON THE POINT OF ENTERING INTO A COVENANT WITH GOD.

9. *Ye are standing*] Properly "stationed", taking a fixed stand for  
 a definite purpose, comp. I Sam. 22.6 and Isa. 3.13.

*before the Lord*] Assembled by Moses to receive the words of the  
 covenant from the Lord (Rashi). Others take it to mean round the  
 ark of the covenant (Ibn Ezra, etc.).

*your heads, your tribes*] The last word is out of place here and dif-  
 ficult of explanation, hence versions and exegetes alike see themselves  
 compelled to construe the phrase as denoting "the heads of your tribes"  
 (Septuagint, Peshitta, Rashi, Ibn Ezra), comp. 1.15 and 5.20. Modern  
 commentators do not hesitate to emend שפטים to שופטים "your judges",  
 comparing Josh. 8.33; 23.2; 24.1, and claiming to be supported in this  
 reading by the Septuagint (Dillmann, Driver, et al.).

*your officers*] See on 1.15.

10. *your little ones, etc.*] So 31.12 and Josh. 8.35.

*thy stranger that is in the midst of thy camp*] The phrase is rare and

from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water;  
 that thou shouldest enter into the covenant of the LORD <sup>11</sup>  
 thy God — and into His oath — which the LORD thy God  
 maketh with thee this day; that He may establish thee <sup>12</sup>  
 this day unto Himself for a people, and that He may be  
 unto thee a God, as He spoke unto thee, and as He swore  
 unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

unusual; generally it runs "thy stranger that is in thy gates" (5.14; 24.15; 31.12).

*from the hewer of thy wood, etc.*] So Josh. 9.21, 23, 27, with reference to the Gibeonites, who, for the fraud practiced by them upon the Israelites, are condemned to serve in these capacities at the sanctuary. Here the allusion is to private servants performing these menial tasks for individual Israelites.

*hewer*] חָצַב, through a wrong association with the similarly sounding חָצַב; more correctly it should be rendered "gatherer", particularly "gatherer of firewood", which meaning it has in Arabic and Ethiopic; comp. on 19.5.

11. *enter into the covenant*] עָבַר בְּבְרִית means literally "pass over into the covenant", an expression found only here, which may have its origin in the ceremony of cutting a calf in two and passing between its parts, which used to accompany the conclusion of a covenant (comp. Gen. 15.10 and Jer. 34.18 f.). Other terms for concluding a covenant are עָמַד בְּבְרִית (II Kings 23.3), בּוֹא בְּבְרִית (II Chron. 15.12), and the very frequent בְּרִית כרת.

*His oath*] אָלָה, which denotes both "oath" and "curse" (comp. BDB., s. v.), serves also as a synonym of בְּרִית and signifies "a covenant sealed by an oath" or imprecations, such as are contained in chapter 28, comp. Gen. 26.28; Ezek. 17.13; Neh. 10.30.

12. *that He may establish thee, etc.*] An epitome of the mutual obligations of the two contracting parties, comp. 26.17 f., also Gen. 17.7 f. and Ex. 6.7. On the construction of the verse ((infinitive followed by a finite verb) comp. GKC., § 114r.



13 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this  
 14 oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day  
 before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not  
 15 here with us this day — for ye know how we dwelt in the  
 land of Egypt; and how we came through the midst of  
 16 the nations through which ye passed; and ye have seen  
 their detestable things, and their idols, wood and stone,  
 17 silver and gold, which were with them — lest there should  
 be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose  
 heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to

13-20. THE COVENANT EXTENDS ALSO TO FUTURE  
 GENERATIONS.

13. *Neither with you only, etc.*] The same thought is expressed in 5.3.

14. *standeth*] On the word יָעֹמֵד (an adverb with a suffix), which remains unexpressed in English, comp. GKC., § 100o.

*that is not here with us*] i. e. the Israelites of the future.

15. *for ye know*] Indicates the reason for including the future generations in the covenant.

*the nations*] i. e. Moab, Ammon, and Midian.

*through which ye passed*] An *idem per idem* construction, on which see 1.46.

16. *their detestable things*] טְקוּצִים is a contemptuous term for heathen idols, very little used in the Pentateuch, but frequent in the Prophets.

*their idols*] גִּלּוּלִים is likewise a contemptuous term for heathen deities, employed once more in the Pentateuch (Lev. 26.30), but frequent in the Prophets. Etymologically, the word denotes either "coarse things" (from גָּלַל "dung"), or "rolled things" (from גָּלַל "to roll"), alluding to the round or podgy form of the block of stone which served as an idol (Driver).

*wood and stone*] So 4.28; 28.36, 64.

*silver and gold*] Comp. 7.25.

17. *lest*] The sense is "may there not be".

*whose heart turneth away*] So 30.17.

go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; and 18  
it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying: 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart — that the watered be swept away with the dry'; the LORD 19

*a root that beareth gall and wormwood]* A striking and singular figure expressive of the dire consequences of idol worship. שֶׁמֶץ, written also רוֹשׁ (32.32), seems to denote some poisonous plant, comp. particularly Hos. 10.4; as the word also signifies "head", some commentators identified it with the poppy, of which several species exist in Palestine. לֵעָמָה is likewise a bitter plant, absinth in Greek (comp. Tristram, *The Natural History of the Bible*<sup>10</sup>, p. 493). The two words are often used together, comp. Jer. 9.14; 23.15; Am. 6.12; Lam. 3.19.

18. *the words of this curse]* i. e. the terms of this covenant, with an allusion to the curses in chapter 28.

*that he bless himself, etc.]* i. e. he may think that the curse will not reach him.

*in the stubbornness of my heart]* Properly "in the firmness of my heart" (שָׂרָה Pa'el and Aph'el means "confirm, strengthen" in Aramaic and Syriac), a phrase used frequently by Jeremiah. The evil promptings of the offender's heart are here contrasted with the beneficent instructions of God. Rashi derives the word from שׁוּר "see, look" and renders the phrase "according to my point of view."

*that the watered be swept away with the dry]* A proverbial expression, the general meaning of which is evident, but the details, owing to the elliptic wording, cannot be easily ascertained. סָפוּת is properly derived from a root denoting "carry away" (especially of a wind carrying away dust), comp. Gen. 18.23 f., etc. (so Septuagint, Vulgate, Ibn Janah, and many modern commentators). רוּחַ and צְמָחָה are feminine adjectives under which some feminine nouns must be understood: some commentators hint at some herbage or plant ("watered and parched alike, will be swept away together", meaning all will be swept away, comp. Driver); others supply "earth" with the same meaning implied (comp. Steuernagel); still others add "person", interpreting "both the just and the unjust will be swept away together" (so Ibn Janah and Ibn Ezra). The general meaning of the phrase appears to be that the offender or

will not be willing to pardon him, but then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy shall be kindled against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from  
 20 under heaven; and the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that is written in this book of the law.

idolater lulls himself into safety by assuming that there is no individual responsibility for a person's transgressions, but that the entire community is responsible for the sins of an individual, hence he thinks he has a good chance of escaping punishment or else has the malicious satisfaction of involving the just in the destruction of the unjust.

19. *pardon him*] Such a wicked person is beyond forgiveness.

*His jealousy*] Comp. on 4.24.

*all the curse, etc.*] The reference is, of course, to the curses listed in 28.15 ff.

*shall be upon him*] The term רבץ denotes "crouch or lie down" (of an animal), comp. Gen. 49.9; it is used here figuratively of the curse settling upon the offender. The Septuagint and Targum have "shall cleave" instead, which is a more suitable expression, comp. 28.21 and 60.

*shall blot out, etc.*] Comp. 9.14.

20. *shall separate him, etc.*] The reference seems to be to "tribe" in v. 17. As Malbim observes (following the Talmud), a tribe is not completely destroyed like an individual and his family, but is separated out of all the other tribes of Israel. This segregation for sins and transgressions consists in the destruction of the land and the exile of its inhabitants, as exemplified first by the Transjordanic two tribes and a half (I Chron. 5.26) and then by the Cisjordanic tribes (II Kings 17.6; 25.1 ff.).

*the curses of the covenant that is written*] The participle agrees with "the covenant", though one expects it to agree with the "curses" referring to 28.15 ff., as in the preceding verse and below v. 26. The versions, indeed, have the participle in the plural, hence in agreement with "curses" (similarly II Chron. 34.24). Some commentators suggest a slight emendation, reading מלך in the singular, as in v. 19.

And the generation to come, your children that shall rise <sup>21</sup>  
 up after you, and the foreigner that shall come from a far  
 land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land,  
 and the sicknesses wherewith the LORD hath made it sick;  
 and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and <sup>22</sup>  
 a burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass  
 groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and  
 Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD over-  
 threw in His anger, and in His wrath; even all the nations <sup>23</sup>  
 shall say: 'Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this  
 land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?' then <sup>24</sup>  
 men shall say: 'Because they forsook the covenant of the

**21-27. YOUR OFFSPRING AND FOREIGNERS WILL BE TOLD THAT  
 YOUR RUIN IS A DIVINE JUDGMENT FOR YOUR APOSTASY.**

**21.** *the generation to come]* So Ps. 48.14; 78.4, 6; 102.19.

*your children]* A case of anacoluthon (GKC., § 167b).

*plagues . . . sicknesses]* So 28.59, 61.

**22.** *the whole land thereof]* The suffix of ארצו peculiarly refers to the same word in the preceding verse.

*brimstone, and salt, and a burning]* A detailed description of the plagues and sicknesses of the land, mentioned in the preceding verse. The soil is pictured as covered with sulphurous, saline and bituminous deposits, preventing all vegetation. The picture is reminiscent of the arid surroundings of the Dead Sea (comp. Tristram, *Land of Israel*, pp. 348 ff.).

*like the overthrow, etc.]* Comp. Gen. 19.24 ff., where the overthrow of the cities of the Plain is depicted.

*Sodom and Gomorrah]* Alluded to also in Isa. 13.19; Jer. 49.18; Am. 4.11.

*Admah and Zeboiim]* Mentioned also in Hos. 11.8, besides Gen. 14.2.

**23f.** *even all the nations shall say]* Reverting to the beginning of v. 21, the intervening verses being of the nature of an anacoluthon.

*Wherefore, etc. . . . Because, etc.]* The same phrases and almost the same words occur in I Kings 9.8 f. and Jer. 22.8 f.

**24.** *then men shall say]* Namely in reply. The Hebrew verb is indefinite and impersonal.

LORD, the God of their fathers, which He made with them  
 25 when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt; and  
 went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods  
 that they knew not, and that He had not allotted unto  
 26 them; therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against  
 this land, to bring upon it all the curse that is written in  
 27 this book; and the LORD rooted them out of their land  
 in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast  
 28 them into another land, as it is this day'. — The secret

25. *and went and served, etc.*] So 13.7 and 14.

*had not allotted unto them*] See on 4.19.

26. *against this land*] The land is identified with its inhabitants.

*all the curse, etc.*] i.e. the curses contained in 28.15 ff. Note the variation of the term for "curse": קללה instead of אלה in v. 19, which may be due to the fact that this is not the utterance of the writer himself, but forms part of the reply made by unknown people to the question of the nations.

27. *rooted them out of their land*] נחש, the opposite of נטע "to plant" (comp. Jer. 24.6; 42.10; Am. 9.15), does not occur again in the Pentateuch, but is used a good deal in the Prophets, especially in Jeremiah.

*in anger, etc.*] The same words and the same sequence in Jer. 21.5 and 32.37.

*and cast them into another land*] The same thought, though expressed by a different verb, also in Jer. 22.26.

*as it is this day*] See on 2.30.

28. This verse, generally regarded as a continuation of Moses' discourse, does not articulate very well with what precedes nor with what follows. The sudden and abrupt change to the first person plural and the almost gnomic character of the first words make it appear as a later insertion, a wise observation by a thoughtful reader or editor. Some think that the use of the first person plural suggests a form of liturgical response after hearing the reading of the law.

*The secret things*] i.e. the things hidden in the future, hence the future in general.

things belong unto the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come **30**  
upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set  
before thee, and thou shalt bethink thyself among all the  
nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,  
and shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and hearken to <sup>2</sup>  
His voice according to all that I command thee this day,

*belong unto the Lord*] i. e. are known only to God.

*the things that are revealed*] i. e. the deeds of the past and present.

*unto us and to our children*] i. e. are our concern. The *puncta extraordinaria* over the letters of these words seem to be of some mystical, rather than critical, significance.

*that we may do, etc.*] i. e. it is our concern and interest to observe all the laws and statutes of this Torah or Code.

Jewish tradition interpreted this verse in the sense that the whole community of Israel is held responsible for transgressions of the Law (whether known or hidden) perpetrated in its midst by individual Israelites (comp. Hoffmann's Commentary ad loc.).

## CHAPTER 30.

### 1-10. REPENTANCE WILL BRING FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION.

The same idea, though curtailed in form, is expressed in 4.29 ff.

1. *the blessing and the curse*] The reference is to chapter 28, which contains both the blessings consequent upon obedience and the curses following disobedience to God.

*thou shalt bethink thyself*] Literally "thou shalt bring back to thy heart", i. e. ponder in thy mind; similarly 4.39; I Kings 8.47.

*hath driven thee*] הדיח (Hiph'il of נדח) is used in the same sense in 13.6, 11, and frequently in Jeremiah.

2. *and shalt return, etc.*] Exactly as 4.30.

- thou and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy  
 3 soul; that then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity,  
 and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather  
 thee from all the peoples, whither the LORD thy God hath  
 4 scattered thee. If any of thine that are dispersed be in  
 the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD  
 thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee.  
 5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which  
 thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He  
 will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

*with all thy heart, etc.]* So 4.29.

3. *will turn thy captivity]* Construing שׁוּב as a transitive verb and deriving שׁוּב from the stem שׁוּב "take captive" (so Targum, Peshitta, Vulgate, Saadya, and early commentators). But, as has been noted time and again, return from captivity is mentioned separately afterwards. Moreover, the meaning "captivity" does not suit some passages in which this phrase occurs, notably Job 42.10. Hence this interpretation has been called into question and another explanation of the phrase has been advanced, namely "will turn thy turning" (deriving שׁוּב from שׁוּב, i. e. will change thy fortune, a meaning which suits very well all the passages in which this phrase occurs (Ewald, Luzzatto, and most modern exegetes, but already anticipated in Aquila's version of the Bible). The phrase occurs many times in the Bible, sometimes more correctly in the Hiph'il (Jer. 33.7, 11, 26; 49.6; Ezek. 39.25). For a detailed study of this figure throughout the Bible, the monographs by Preuschen (Giessen, 1894) and Dietrich (Giessen, 1925) should be consulted.

*have compassion upon thee]* So 13.18; comp. also Jer. 12.15; 33.26.  
*and gather thee, etc.]* Similarly Jer. 23.3; 29.14, etc.

4. *If any of thine, etc.]* Repeated in Neh. 1.9.

*in the uttermost parts of heaven]* i. e. in very distant regions of the world, the celestial vault being supposed to rest upon the earth; similarly 4.32; Isa. 13.5; Ps. 19.7; Neh. 1.9.

5. *do thee good]* So 8.16; 28.63.

*and multiply thee]* So 7.13; 13.18.

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, that persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and hearken to the voice of the LORD, and do all His commandments which I command thee this day. And the LORD thy God will make thee overabundant in all the work of thy hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good; for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as He rejoiced over thy fathers; if thou shalt hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep

6. *will circumcise thy heart*] Comp. 10.16, where the Israelites are told to do it themselves. Here God's assistance is offered them as penitents (RMbN).

*to love, etc.*] See on 6.5.

*that thou mayest live*] This is the customary phrase in Hebrew, but our text really has a variation "for the sake of thy life" (noun instead of verb).

7. *all these curses*] Namely the curses enumerated in 28.15 ff.

8. *And thou*] The pronoun is emphatic, stressing the contrast with "thine enemies" of the previous verse.

*shalt return and hearken*] i. e. shalt hearken once more, as in previous times.

9. *will make thee overabundant, etc.*] A repetition of 28.11.

*will again rejoice, etc.*] Similarly 28.63.

10. *if thou shalt hearken, etc.*] A repetition of the condition required to bring about a renewal of God's favor.

*which are written, etc.*] As in 29.20, where the grammatical construction is likewise similar, namely plurals of abstracts followed by the feminine singular of the verbal predicate (comp. GKC., § 145k; on the collective sense of the feminine form, see *ibid.*, § 122s). Some modern commentators unnecessarily emend the verbal predicate from singular to plural.



His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law; if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.

- 11 For this commandment which I command thee this day,  
 12 it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say: 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear  
 13 it, that we may do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say: 'Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do  
 14 it?' But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

11-14. GOD'S COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT VERY DIFFICULT OF PERFORMANCE.

11. *this commandment*] מִצְוָה is used here collectively, as in 8.1; 27.1, etc.

*too hard for thee*] Literally "wonderful, mysterious", i. e. abstruse and recondite in its implications. This is no doubt an allusion to some of the Oriental mystery cults, as practiced particularly in Syria and Egypt.

*far off*] i. e. inaccessible.

12-13. Epexegetical of the last phrase in the preceding verse: The Torah or Law in general is not in heaven, nor beyond the sea, both regions inaccessible to man. Some commentators take v. 12 as an explanation of "too hard" and v. 13 as an exposition of "far off" in v. 11 (Ibn Ezra, et al.).

14. *the word*] i. e. the word of God, namely the Torah.

*very nigh*] i. e. it has been brought very nigh unto you through constant repetition and inculcation.

*in thy mouth*] The Torah is transmitted from mouth to mouth, comp. 6.7; 11.19; 31.19, etc.

*in thy heart*] viz. you are to meditate upon it in your heart, comp. 6.6; 11.18.

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances; then thou shalt live and multiply, and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest in to possess it. But if thy heart turn away, and thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I declare unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over the Jordan to go in to possess it.

15-20. FINAL APPEAL TO ISRAEL TO CHOOSE BETWEEN  
LIFE AND DEATH.

15. *See, I have set before thee*] Namely for your choice, so 1.8, comp. also 11.26.

*life and good, etc.*] i. e. life and prosperity, and death and misfortune, comp. 11.16 ff., where the alternatives are the blessing and the curse. According to Rashi, the meaning is "life which is the result of good actions, and death which is the consequence of evil". Targum Yerushalmi construes "life" as "the way of life", and death as "the way of death", comp. Jer. 21.8.

16. *in that I command thee, etc.*] It is claimed that this verse is defective, wanting a conditional clause: after setting before them the way of life and the way of death it is evidently the purport of the speaker to say that if they obey the commandments of God they shall live and if not they shall be destroyed. Already the Septuagint felt this discrepancy and supplied at the beginning, "if thou shalt hearken to the commandment of the Lord thy God", which increment is adopted by most modern commentators.

*live and multiply*] Comp. 8.1.

*will bless thee, etc.*] So 28.8, etc.

17. *if thy heart turn away*] Comp. 29.17.

*shalt be drawn away, etc.*] So 4.19.

18. *I declare, etc.*] So 4.26, etc.

- 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day,  
that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing  
and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live,  
20 thou and thy seed; to love the LORD thy God, to hearken  
to His voice, and to cleave unto Him; for that is thy life,  
and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in  
the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to  
Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

### 31 And Moses went and spoke these words unto all Israel.

19. *I call heaven and earth to witness*] A common figure in the Bible, comp. 4.26; 8.19; 31.28, and elsewhere.

*the blessing and the curse*] The blessing being life and the curse spelling death.

20. *to love, etc.*] Comp. 6.5.

*to cleave*] So 10.20; 11.22; 13.5.

*for that is thy life, etc.*] Comp. 4.1, etc.

*which the Lord swore, etc.*] Similarly 1.8.

## CHAPTER 31.

With the close of Moses' discourses the narrative of the Pentateuch is resumed, in order to describe the appointment of Joshua as leader of Israel and record Moses' final counsels and farewell to his people.

### 1-8. APPOINTMENT OF JOSHUA.

Comp. 1.37 f.; 3.21 f. and 28.

1. *went*] viz. from tribe to tribe (Ibn Ezra). Some take the expression in the sense of "set himself" or "proceeded" (to speak), pointing to Gen. 35.22; Ex. 2.1; Josh. 9.4, etc. (Sforno, Knobel, Keil, Ehrlich).

*these words*] Earlier exegetes maintained that the reference is to the following words of Moses (vv. 2-6). But if this were so, as rightly pointed out by Driver, לֵאמֹר "saying" would have to follow "these words" (comp., e. g., Ex. 20.1). Hence modern commentators prefer

And he said unto them: 'I am a hundred and twenty 2  
 years old this day; I can no more go out and come in;  
 and the LORD hath said unto me: Thou shalt not go over  
 this Jordan. The LORD thy God, He will go over before 3  
 thee; He will destroy these nations from before thee, and  
 thou shalt dispossess them; and Joshua, he shall go over  
 before thee, as the LORD hath spoken. And the LORD will 4  
 do unto them as He did to Sihon and to Og, the kings  
 of the Amorites, and unto their land; whom He destroyed.  
 And the LORD will deliver them up before you, and ye 5  
 shall do unto them according unto all the commandment

to take the phrase as a reference to the preceding discourse concerning the covenant, or, better still, to words such as are found in 3.28, where God appoints Joshua as Moses' successor and bids Moses to encourage him (Dillmann, et al.). The Septuagint obviates the difficulty by rendering "and he finished speaking"; however, all the other versions support the masoretic text.

*unto all Israel]* See on 1.1.

2. *a hundred and twenty years old]* So 34.7.

*go out and come in]* i.e. engage in activities and undertakings, comp. 28.6 and Josh. 14.11. Although it is stated in 34.7 that "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated", yet he was unable to lead them any longer, particularly in war. Moses reminds them of this fact, viz. his uselessness as a leader, in order to comfort them in their grief at losing his services (RMbN).

*said unto me]* Comp. 3.27; 4.21 f.

3. *He will go over, etc.]* Comp. 9.3.

*and Joshua, etc.]* See 1.38; 3.28.

4. *as He did to Sihon and to Og]* Similarly 3.21. The fate of Sihon is narrated in 2.32 ff., that of Og in 3.1 ff.

5. *will deliver them up]* So 7.2 and 23.

*according unto all the commandment, etc.]* The terms of treatment of these nations are laid down in 7.2 ff.

- 6 which I have commanded you. Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be affrighted at them; for the LORD thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.'
- 7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel: 'Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt go with this people into the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed.'
- 9 And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the

6. *Be strong, etc.*] So below vv. 7 and 23, also Josh. 1.6 f., 9, 18, etc. *fear not, etc.*] So 1.29; 20.3.

*He it is, etc.*] So 1.30 and below v. 8.

7. *in the sight of all Israel*] The actual appointment of Joshua is public, in the presence of all Israel; see on 1.30.

*thou shalt go with this people*] A very weak phrase, since of a leader like Joshua one expects "thou shalt bring", as it appears indeed in v. 23 in exactly the same context. Of the ancient versions, the Septuagint and Targum support the masoretic reading, but the Samaritan, Peshitta and Vulgate have the causative instead, which is adopted by modern commentators (Knobel, Dillmann, Klostermann, et al.).

*cause them to inherit it*] Comp. 1.38 and 3.28.

8. *will not fail thee, etc.*] As above v. 6 and Josh. 1.5. *fear not, etc.*] So 1.21; Josh. 8.1 and 10.25.

### 9-13. SEPTENNIAL PUBLIC RECITAL OF THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW.

9. *And Moses wrote, etc.*] Comp. below v. 24. The writing is subordinate to the injunction that follows in vv. 10 ff.

*this law*] i. e. the law of Deuteronomy, as in 1.5; 27.3, etc. Another view is that the reference is to the entire Pentateuch (RMbN, Hoffmann).

*delivered it, etc.*] Moses handed it over to the Levitical priests, who

priests the sons of Levi, that bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses 10 commanded them, saying: 'At the end of every seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the 11 LORD thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

constituted the ecclesiastical authority, and to the elders, who were the civil representatives of the people.

*that bore the ark, etc.]* i. e. whose function was to bear the ark of the covenant, comp. 10.8.

10. *commanded them]* Namely the Levitical priests and the elders.

*At the end of every seven years]* See on 15.1.

*the set time]* מִצֵּד denotes "appointed or fixed time" for a sacred festival, comp. Ex. 23.15. The same word in 16.6 signifies a fixed hour of the day.

*the year of release]* See on 15.1 ff.

*the feast of tabernacles]* Comp. 16.13 ff.

11. *to appear, etc.]* See on 16.16. Some commentators prefer to read the Kal רָאוּהוּ instead of the Niph'al לִרְאוֹת (involving a change of vowels only), "to see the face of the Lord", construing the masoretic vowels as an attempt to obviate an anthropomorphism. According to the Talmud (Sotah 41a), this phrase implies that the ceremony of reading the Torah took place at the close of the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

*in the place, etc.]* So 16.16, see on 12.5.

*thou shalt read]* There is no indication as to who is to be the reader. According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, IV. 8.12), it was the high priest; according to the Mishna (Sotah 7.8), it was the king. Since these two sources, both reliable, go back to different times (the Mishna to the time of Agrippa I, the pious king; Josephus to the period of Agrippa II, his contemporary), it is not unreasonable to assume that the reading was supposed to be done by the highest official in Israel, be he king or high priest (Hirsch, Hoffmann).

*this law]* i. e. the law of Deuteronomy, comp. on 1.5, etc. The Mishna (Sotah 7.8) represents Agrippa I as reading only selections

- 12 Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this  
 13 law; and that their children, who have not known, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it.'

from our Book of Deuteronomy, viz. 1.1-6.6; 11.13 ff.; 14.22 ff.; 17.14 ff.; 26.12 ff., and chapters 27-28.

12. *Assemble the people*] So 4.10.

*the women and the little ones*] Who are generally free from such obligations, comp. 16.16.

*thy stranger, etc.*] i.e. the resident foreigner, who enjoys certain rights and privileges, and hence it is for his benefit to know the law of the land.

*that they may learn, etc.*] So 17.19, etc.

13. *that their children, etc.*] The instruction of children is inculcated in 6.7; 11.19, etc.

*as long as ye live, etc.*] So 4.10; 12.1.

#### 14-23. THE COMMISSION OF JOSHUA AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SONG OF MOSES.

The genuineness of this entire section has been called into question by modern commentators for the following reasons: 1) The appointment of Joshua was commanded in 1.37 f. and 3.21 and was apparently executed in 31.7 f.; 2) this section interrupts the connection between vv. 9-13 and vv. 24-27, which are closely related and deal with the same subject; 3) vv. 16-22 are evidently an introduction to the Song of Moses, but so are vv. 24-30, and since there cannot be two introductions to one and the same song, the latter, which is couched in the style of Deuteronomy, must be assumed to be the genuine introduction, while the former, which is written in a non-Deuteronomistic style, must be regarded as a foreign element. While the first argument may be countered by the consideration that the appointment of Joshua in vv. 7 f. is executed by Moses, but in vv. 14 f. it is executed by God, the second and third arguments remain cogent and inevitably lead to the

And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Behold, thy days <sup>14</sup> approach that thou must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may give him a charge.' And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. And the LORD appeared in <sup>15</sup> the Tent in a pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the Tent. And the LORD said unto Moses: <sup>16</sup> 'Behold, thou art about to sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go astray after the foreign gods of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will

conclusion that either the text had been disarranged from its natural sequence or else the confusion was caused by an interpolation (vv. 16-22) of an over-zealous annotator or editor.

14. *thy days approach, etc.*] For this idiom comp. Gen. 47.29 and I Kings 2.1.

*present yourselves*] Literally "draw yourselves up erect", comp. Num. 11.16, etc.

*the tent of meeting*] A tent pitched without the camp, in which Moses used to receive his revelations and messages from God (Ex. 33.7 ff.).

*that I may give him a charge*] i. e. appoint him to his office, similarly 3.28; Num. 27.19, etc.

15. *in a pillar of cloud*] So Num. 12.5.

*over the door of the Tent*] Comp. Ex. 33.9 f.

#### 16-22. INTRODUCTION TO THE SONG OF MOSES.

16. *about to sleep with thy fathers*] i. e. about to die, a euphemistic idiom frequent in the historical books of the Bible.

*go astray*] Literally "go a whoring" after foreign gods. Infidelity to God is often represented in the Bible as a breach of conjugal troth, comp. Hos. 3.1, and elsewhere.

*the foreign gods of the land*] Literally "gods of foreignness of the land", an awkward phrase with a double genitive.

*among them*] Taken as a reference to the gods. Ibn Ezra prefers to take בקרבו as a reference to "land", which is sometimes masculine in Hebrew (Gen. 13.6; Isa. 9.18).



forsake Me, and break My covenant which I have made with  
 17 them. Then My anger shall be kindled against them in  
 that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My  
 face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many  
 evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that they will  
 say in that day: Are not these evils come upon us because  
 18 our God is not among us? And I will surely hide My face  
 in that day for all the evil which they shall have wrought,  
 19 in that they are turned unto other gods. Now therefore  
 write ye this song for you, and teach thou it the children

*forsake Me]* So 28.20.

*break My covenant, etc.]* Comp. below v. 20; Lev. 26.15, etc.

17. *forsake them]* An antithesis to "forsake Me" in the preceding verse.

*hide My face from them]* i. e. withdraw My favor from them, similarly v. 18 and 32.20; comp. the antithesis in Lev. 26.9.

*they shall be devoured]* Literally "for devouring", viz. by other nations, comp. 7.16.

*Are not these evils, etc.]* A complaint is voiced against God that He did not fulfill His promise to be in their midst (7.21). As a matter of fact God forsook them only after they had forsaken Him (Luzzatto).

18. *I will surely hide My face, etc.]* God will continue to withhold His favor from Israel on account of its apostasy.

19-22. Injunction to write the following song (32.1-43), so that it may serve as a witness between God and Israel.

19. *Now therefore]* Since the apostasy of the people is bound to come, sooner or later.

*write ye]* In the plural, because the message is directed to both Moses and Joshua (RMbN), comp. 32.44, where the delivery of the song is likewise done by Moses and Joshua together. Another view is that the command is directed to all Israel: whoever can should write this song (Ibn Ezra). But in view of the singular in v. 22, many commentators are inclined to emend our text to the singular.

of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, flowing with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten their fill, and waxen fat; and turned unto other gods, and served them, and despised Me, and broken My covenant; then it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are come upon them, that this song shall testify before them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; for I know their imagination how they do even now, before I have brought

*this song*] i. e. the song contained in 32.1-43. According to the Talmud (Sanh. 21b), the whole Torah is implied here, which every Israelite should write for himself.

*teach thou it*] The Septuagint and Vulgate render "teach ye it", in order to accommodate this expression to the preceding verb, which is in the plural.

*put it in their mouths*] So that they may know it by rote, similarly Ex. 4.15. Here, too, the Septuagint and the Vulgate depart from the masoretic text in rendering the plural "put ye it".

*a witness for Me, etc.*] The song will demonstrate that God had forewarned them of the dire consequences of apostasy.

20. *which I swore, etc.*] Comp. 6.10.

*flowing with milk and honey*] Similarly 6.3.

*and they shall have eaten, etc.*] This is elaborated more fully in the Song (32.12-15).

*and turned unto other gods, etc.*] Likewise described in the Song (32.15-18).

*despised Me*] So also in 32.19; Num. 14.11, 23; 16.30, etc.

*broken My covenant*] So above v. 16.

21. *many evils and troubles*] As above v. 17.

*as a witness*] viz. that God had forewarned them of the consequences (Rashi), comp. above v. 19.

*for it shall not be forgotten, etc.*] The song is intended for future generations. This clause must be regarded as parenthetical.

*their imagination*] יצר, properly "form, purpose", is employed in

- 22 them into the land which I swore.' So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.  
 23 And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said: 'Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them; and I will be with thee.'  
 24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were  
 25 finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, that bore

the Bible mostly in the sense of "evil imagination", in rebellion against God, comp. Gen. 6.5; 8.21, etc.

22. *So Moses wrote, etc.*] Exactly as commanded in v. 19.

### 23. FINAL CHARGE TO JOSHUA.

*And he gave, etc.*] As the verse stands, the subject can only be that of the preceding verse, viz. Moses; but, as pointed out above on vv. 14 ff., this sentence may have been dislocated from its original place after v. 15, in which case the subject would be God.

*Be strong, etc.*] As in v. 7.

*thou shalt bring*] Instead of "thou shalt go" of v. 7.

*I will be with thee*] The same promise as that made by God in His charge to Moses (Ex. 3.12), comp. above v. 8.

### 24-30. THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW IS TO BE PLACED BESIDE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

24. *when Moses had made an end of writing, etc.*] This verse resumes the subject of vv. 9-13.

*the words of this law*] i. e. the Deuteronomic Law, comp. on 1.5.

25. *the Levites, etc.*] As is evident from v. 9 above, the reference here is not to any members of the tribe of Levi, who were not permitted to touch the ark (Num. 4.15), but to the Levitical priests officiating at the central sanctuary (Ibn Ezra, RMbN), who were charged with the special duty of bearing the ark (10.8).

the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: 'Take this 26  
 book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the  
 covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for  
 a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy 27  
 stiff neck; behold, while I am yet alive with you this day,  
 ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much  
 more after my death? Assemble unto me all the elders of 28  
 your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these  
 words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to witness

26. *Take*] The Hebrew has an infinitive instead of an imperative, as in 15.2, etc.

*this book of the law*] So 29.20; 30.10; Josh. 1.8.

*by the side of the ark*] In the Talmud (B. B. 14a) there is a controversy concerning the exact spot where the Book of the Law was placed: according to R. Meir it was deposited inside the ark, according to R. Judah it lay outside the ark, on a lateral protruding ledge. According to Targum Yerushalmi, the Torah lay in a box on the side of the ark. Such a box is indeed mentioned together with the ark in I Sam. 6.8, 11, 15.

*that it may be there for a witness*] viz. in case of deviation from its tenets. The same expression is used of the song in v. 19 above.

*against thee*] Israel is meant, since the priests personify the people.

27. *I know*] Moses speaks from personal experience.

*thy rebellion and thy stiff neck*] Comp. for the first expression 1.26, 43; 9.7, 23 f., and for the second 9.6, 13; 10.16.

28. *the elders of your tribes*] An uncommon expression, for which elsewhere we find "heads of your tribes", comp. 1.15 and 5.20, see also on 29.9. The Septuagint here renders "heads of your tribes and your judges".

*officers*] Comp. on 1.15.

*these words*] i. e. the song (32.1-43), which opens with an invocation of heaven and earth.

*call heaven and earth, etc.*] Similarly 4.26 and 30.19, comp. also the exordium of the song.

29 against them. For I know that after my death ye will in any wise deal corruptly, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the end of days; because ye will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him through the work of  
30 your hands.' And Moses spoke in the ears of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were finished:

29. *I know*] Comp. above on v. 27.

*after my death*] This phrase is placed before instead of after כִּי, probably for emphasis, similarly Gen. 18.20; I Kings 8.37, and elsewhere.

*deal corruptly*] With special reference to idolatry, comp. 4.16 and 25.

*turn aside, etc.*] As in the case of the golden calf, comp. 9.12 and 16.

*will befall you*] קרא is a parallel form of קרה "happen", so Jer. 44.23; on the form of the word comp. GKC., § 74g. In vv. 17 and 21 מצא is used instead.

*in the end of days*] See on 4.30. The allusion here is to the distant future, when apostasy will lead Israel to inevitable disaster.

*because ye will do, etc.*] Similarly 4.25.

*through the work of your hands*] An allusion to idols made by human hands, comp. 4.28.

30. *all the assembly of Israel*] So Lev. 16.17; Josh. 8.35, etc.

## CHAPTER 32.

### 1-43 THE SONG OF MOSES.

This poem, one of the most beautiful and eloquent compositions in the entire Bible, hinges chiefly on Israel's apostasy from a just and faithful God, who nevertheless, in His infinite mercy, forgives its sins and redeems it from perdition. The poem is didactic in nature, sketching in bold colors Israel's religious experiences in the desert and the lessons to be derived therefrom. It is claimed by critics of the Pentateuch that the whole tenor of the poem is post-Mosaic, that its diction

and phraseology are quite late (analogous to those of the literary prophets), and that the contents, although not clearly defined, still reflect later times and circumstances. They only differ as to the exact time when it might have been composed. Some believe that the period of the Syrian wars (early eighth century) alone suits the reproachful tone of the poem, further arguments being the similarity between v. 36 and II Kings 14.26, the absence of all mention of exile, the characterization of some unique words as pointing to the northern origin of the poem, etc. (Knobel, Dillmann, et al.). Others, who believe that "no-people" in v. 21 refers to the Assyrians, are of the opinion that the poem originated during the fall of Samaria in 722 (Reuss) or during the invasion of Sennacherib in 701. Finally, by reason of literary affinities with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the second Isaiah, some critics ascribe the poem to the eve or beginning of the Babylonian exile (Kuenen, Driver, et al.), others to the end of that exile, since the deliverance is pictured as being near (Steuernagel, Moore, Marti, et al.). These critics naturally take "no-people" to refer to the Chaldeans. However, all these hypotheses are by no means convincing. The fact is that the highly imaginative poem contains no definite allusions to historical events by which its exact or even approximate age can be gauged. It is not true that verses 7-12 look back to the Mosaic age as to a distant past: they might just as well be construed as an allusion to the patriarchal age, in accordance with Jewish tradition. Moreover, the description of Israel's affluence and the consequent lapse into idolatry and ruin, from which it is ultimately saved by God (vv. 13 ff.), is a universal religious motive common to the early parts of Scriptures (comp. particularly the book of Judges, *passim*) as well as to the literary Prophets. As to the expression "no-people" in v. 21, it is quite probable that the author had no particular people in mind and simply used this designation for any possible future enemy of Israel—Philistines, Midianites, Aramaeans, etc. Nor is there anything in the poem's diction that might betray a late origin: the entire song is couched in a plastic and immaculate Hebrew style weighted with archaic forms and rare expressions such as are found in some of the earliest poetic productions of the Hebrews. Besides, a song of Moses is required on the basis of 31.19 ff. and 28 ff., and even if it be assumed, for the sake of argument, that the song in its present form is somewhat late, it might still be argued that the supposedly late elements were superimposed on the original song of Moses by a later editor or annotator.

- 32 Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak;  
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
- 2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain,  
My speech shall distil as the dew;  
As the small rain upon the tender grass,  
And as the showers upon the herb.

1-3. EXORDIUM, CONTAINING AN INVOCATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH TO LISTEN TO THE PREGNANT UTTERANCES OF THE SONG.

1. *Give ear, ye heavens, etc.*] Similarly Isa. 1.2, and elsewhere. Heaven and earth are invoked as witnesses because they are eternal and immutable (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

2. *doctrine*] לִקְחָה, literally "something received", hence "instruction, teaching". This word is naturally frequent in the book of Proverbs, but it occurs also in Isa. 29.24 and Job 11.4.

*shall drop*] עָרַף, here and in 33.28, in the sense of gentle, though effective, dripping. Of the same meaning is רָעַף (a case of metathesis), which occurs five times in the Bible.

*shall distil*] A poetical figure, expressing the downward flow and trickle of the dew, which is applied to speech.

*the small rain*] שְׁעִירִים, properly "rain drops", occurs only here, and is of doubtful origin. Some associate it with שְׁעָר "storm" (Targum, Rashi, Gesenius), others with the same word meaning "hair" (Ibn Ezra "thin", like hair; George Adam Smith).

*tender grass*] שֶׁמֶץ is fresh young grass, comp. Gen. 1.11, and elsewhere.

*as the showers upon the herb*] So Mic. 5.6, comp. also Ps. 72.6. רִבִּיבִים, derived from a root meaning "be much", properly denotes "copious showers", causing fertility (Ibn Ezra). The similes, conveying the gentle, yet penetrating, action of rain or dew upon grass or plants, very aptly express the speaker's wish that his words, though gentle, may prove effective and productive.

For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; 3  
 Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

The Rock, His work is perfect; 4  
 For all His ways are justice;  
 A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,

3. *I will proclaim the name of the Lord*] Similarly Ex. 33.19 and 34.5.  $\square\psi$  here is not merely "name", but "renown, glory, character", as revealed in God's dealings with Israel. This verse states the primary purpose of the speaker, viz. to declare openly the great qualities and moral attributes of God.

*Ascribe ye*] Literally "give ye"; comp. Ps. 29.1 f., where the word is used in the same sense as here.

*greatness*] Namely of God, similarly 3.24; 5.21; 9.26; 11.2.

#### 4-6. GOD'S RECTITUDE AND FAITHFULNESS CONTRASTED WITH ISRAEL'S CORRUPTION AND FAITHLESSNESS.

4. *The Rock*] A metaphor for God, who is immutable and invulnerable like a rock, in whose proximity one finds refuge and safety. The term recurs in vv. 15, 18, 30, 31, 37, and also elsewhere, particularly in the Psalms. An analogy to this designation may be found in Assyrian, where the god Bel has an appellative "great mountain". It should be noted that "the rock" is a *casus pendens* like Ps. 18.31 (GKC., § 143; Driver, *Tenses*, p. 265).

*His work is perfect*] i. e. His rule of the universe is irreproachable and without a blemish. For a similar phrase comp. Ps. 18.31: "As for God, His way is perfect". The implied meaning is that God is not to blame for the misfortunes of Israel: Whatever mishap or untowardness may befall it, is due entirely to its own failing and lapse of faith (Ibn Ezra). Another interpretation is that though God is strong like a rock He does not deal with Israel severely, but, on the contrary, judges it mildly (Rashi).

*all His ways are justice*] A Hebrew idiom, imitated in English, in which the predicate is expressed by a noun instead of an adjective or participle (comp. Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 251). The same idea is expressed somewhat differently in Isa. 30.18 and 61.8.

*God of faithfulness, etc.*] i. e. a God who keeps His promises without deviation (comp. 7.9).



Just and right is He.

- 5 Is corruption His? No; His children's is the blemish;  
A generation crooked and perverse.

*Just and right*] A further elaboration of God's moral attributes which enable Him to govern the universe justly and wisely.

5. God's perfections and moral attributes are now contrasted with Israel's imperfections and moral blemishes.

*Is corruption His? No; His children's is the blemish*] A forced interpretation of an insuperably difficult phrase, taking חַטָּא as a verbal noun, on a par with עֲלָם below v. 35, and separating the negative particle from the following word on account of its disjunctive accent. This interpretation goes back to Meklenburg, and is not worse than other interpretations which endeavor to account for every word and letter in the masoretic text. The ancient versions render more or less as follows: "They have dealt corruptly, not towards Him, children of blemish" (Samaritan, Septuagint, Targum, Peshitta), i. e. they may have hurt themselves, but not Him, by their transgressions. Symmachus alone translates "His no-sons have dealt corruptly towards Him . . ." (so also Ibn Ezra and some later commentators; on the combination "no-sons" comp. below v. 17), but the rest of the phrase, on which much hinges, is not preserved. Somewhat like it is the explanation of RMbN: "They who are not His children, their blemish is corruption unto Him" (similarly Luzzatto). Of modern commentators, some take the following "generation" as subject of חַטָּא and the intervening words as in apposition to it, rendering as follows: "Corruptly has dealt towards Him—not His children, their blemish—a twisted and crooked generation" (Knobel, Keil, etc.); others see themselves forced to resort to conjectural emendation of the Hebrew text. Of the latter the following deserve mention: "His children have dealt corruptly towards Him: there is a blemish in them" (so Dillmann); "His no-sons have corrupted their faithfulness towards Him" (so Klostermann); "their own blemish destroys His non-sons" (Ehrlich).

*crooked and perverse*] The two adjectives in Hebrew are synonymous, both describing the type of mind that twists and deviates from the right path and just course. פְּחֻלָּה (reduplicated) occurs only here.

Do ye thus requite the LORD,  
 O foolish people and unwise?  
 Is not He thy father that hath gotten thee?  
 Hath He not made thee, and established thee?

6

Remember the days of old,  
 Consider the years of many generations;

7

6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord*] The order of the words is different in Hebrew: "To the Lord will you repay this?", with emphasis on the Lord (comp. the similar rhetorical figure in Job 13.7; 21.22; 22.2).

*foolish*] viz. in deeds (Ibn Ezra), forgetting the benefits showered upon it (Rashi, RMbN).

*unwise*] viz. in mental observation (Ibn Ezra), lacking in insight and foresight (Rashi, RMbN).

*that hath gotten thee*] Comp. Gen. 4.1; 14.19, etc. The allusion is to the redemption from Egypt (RSbM), through which act God acquired Israel as a nation and established His paternal relationship towards it.

*made thee, etc.*] i. e. fashioned and perfected you as a nation among nations (Rashi, Ibn Ezra), comp. Isa. 44.2; Ps. 119.73.

#### 7-14. RETROSPECT OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF ISRAEL UNDER GOD'S CARE.

7. *the days of old*] The feminine plural ending of ימים occurs only here and in Ps. 90.15; ימים, "long duration", used both of antiquity and futurity, is a relative term whose signification depends solely upon the surrounding circumstances and contiguous data. According to Jewish tradition, the reference here is to the Antediluvian, Diluvian or Patriarchal age (Sifre, Rashi). Modern commentators, on the other hand, claim that vv. 8 ff. demonstrate sufficiently that the allusion is to the period of the formation of the nation under Moses, the period of the exodus from Egypt and the settlement in Canaan, comp. similar allusions in Isa. 63.11 and Mic. 7.14 (Driver and others).

*many generations*] Literally "generation and generation", i. e. every generation, the conjunctive having a distributive force.

Ask thy father, and he will declare unto thee,  
Thine elders, and they will tell thee.

- 8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,  
When He separated the children of men,  
He set the borders of the peoples  
According to the number of the children of Israel.
- 9 For the portion of the LORD is His people,  
Jacob the lot of His inheritance.

*Ask]* So 4.32; Job 8.8.

*thy father, etc.]* The younger is to inquire of the older generation concerning its past history. Apparently this refers to a remote age, when Jewish tradition was still chiefly oral.

8ff. The reply to the query in the preceding verse.

*Most High]* An appellative of God found only in poetry.

*separated]* Comp. Gen. 10.32.

*He set]* The Hebrew has the jussive instead of the ordinary imperfect, which is explained as a poetical substitute for the imperfect with *vav* conversive in historical narrative (comp. Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 215 f.).

*according to the number, etc.]* i. e. God fixed the boundaries of the nations in such a way as to reserve a land for Israel in keeping with its numbers. Connecting this phrase with the seventy souls who went down to Egypt (Gen. 46.27), early Jewish commentators deduced from here the division of the world into seventy nations and seventy tongues (Sifre, Targum Yerushalmi, Rashi).

9. *the portion of the Lord]* When God divided the nations and their territories, He chose Israel as His share and the land of Canaan as its territory. The same thought is expressed in 7.6; 10.15, and elsewhere. The words "portion" and "inheritance" are coupled together also in 12.12; 18.1, and elsewhere, with reference to land.

*His people]* i. e. Israel.

*the lot of His inheritance]* Similarly Ps. 105.11. חבל really means "measuring-cord", with which lots used to be measured to determine their boundaries.

He found him in a desert land, 10  
 And in the waste, a howling wilderness;  
 He compassed him about, He cared for him,  
 He kept him as the apple of His eye.  
 As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, 11  
 Hovereth over her young,

10. *He found him*] The imperfect is used in poetry for vividness apart from iteration (Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 31 f.).

*in a desert land*] The tradition about Israel being found in a desert is reflected also in Jer. 2.2 and Hos. 9.10.

*waste*] חֲדָד implies a wild and desolate region, comp. Ps. 107.40; Job 12.24; coupled with בָּהוּ of similar connotation in Gen. 1.2 and Jer. 4.23.

*a howling wilderness*] Properly "a wilderness of howling" (of beasts). The nominal form יָלַל occurs only here; יִשְׁמַן is the poetical counter-part of מְדַבֵּר. The division of words followed here is in agreement with the accents, but Driver advocates combining "waste" with this phrase, as follows: "in the waste of the howling of a desert" = "the howling waste of a desert", comp. 31.16; Isa. 2.11; Jer. 8.8; Ps. 20.7, etc., all of which exhibit phrases with a double genitive.

*He compassed him about, etc.*] This and the following imperfects are frequentative. Note the uncontracted form with *Nun energicum* found only in poetry (GKC., § 58k).

*He cared for him*] Properly "bestowed attention upon him". The Po'lel of בִּין occurs only here.

*He kept him*] viz. from wild beasts and inimical nations (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

*as the apple of His eye*] Namely the tenderest and dearest part of the body. אֵינָא is diminutive of אֵינָא and may have reference to the manikin reflected in the pupil of the eye (Ibn Ezra). To avoid an anthropomorphism some commentators construe the eye as man's eye (Sforzo, Meklenburg).

11. *As an eagle*] Properly the griffon-vulture, see on 14.12. The same figure also in Ex. 19.4.

*that stirreth up her nest*] Namely for the purpose of teaching her young ones to fly.

*her young*] Who are inexperienced in flight. נָחַל occurs also in Gen. 15.9.

- Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them,  
 Beareth them on her pinions —
- 12 The LORD alone did lead him,  
 And there was no strange god with Him.
- 13 He made him ride on the high places of the earth,  
 And he did eat the fruitage of the field;  
 And He made him to suck honey out of the crag,  
 And oil out of the flinty rock;

*Beareth them on her pinions*] When they are exhausted and unable to fly themselves. The implication of this simile is that in the same manner God hovered over Israel in their infancy and trained them to independence and nationhood.

12. *alone*] בודד, being a noun, is construed here as an adverbial accusative denoting "in isolation" (so Jer. 15.17, etc.).

*strange god*] Properly "foreign god", comp. Ps. 81.10, where the two expressions are used in poetic parallelism. The thought expressed here, that in leading Israel out of the desert God was alone and did not have the coöperation of other gods, is found also in Hos. 13.4.

13. *He made him ride*] i. e. made him take possession.

*on the high places of the earth*] Canaan was regarded as the most elevated country on earth (Rashi, RSbM), comp. Am. 4.13; Mic. 1.3. The Ketib בְּמוֹת (so elsewhere) has a double plural termination (fem. and masc.), comp. GKC., § 87s.

*And he did eat*] For which the Samaritan, Septuagint, Targum and Peshitta have "and He made him eat", in agreement with the preceding and following Hiph'il verbs. However, perhaps the Kal was used purposely for the sake of variety (Driver).

*the fruitage of the field*] So Lam. 4.9, comp. also Ezek. 36.30. שֶׁדִּי is an archaic form, used only in poetry.

*honey out of the crag*] Palestine is rich in honey, which is cultivated chiefly in fissures of rocks (comp., in addition, Ps. 81.17) or in hollow trees from which it drips on the ground (comp. I Sam. 14.26).

*oil out of the flinty rock*] The olive likewise flourishes in hollows between rocks, and never does it yield oil so abundantly as on limestone terraces and their débris (George Adam Smith, *Jerusalem*, I, 300).

Curd of kine, and milk of sheep,  
 With fat of lambs,  
 And rams of the breed of Bashan, and he-goats,  
 With the kidney-fat of wheat;  
 And of the blood of the grape thou drankest foaming  
 wine.

14

14. *Curd of kine*] חמאה is fermented or curdled milk, known in the East by the Arabic name *leben* and forming a cool and refreshing beverage on hot days.

*fat of lambs, and rams, etc.*] So according to the accents, but the Septuagint renders "with fat of lambs and of rams". The latter division is adopted by modern commentators, who quote I Sam. 15.22 in its favor.

*lambs*] כרים (generally derived from a stem denoting "dance, skip, gallop") is a rare synonym of כבשים and is used chiefly in poetry. According to Driver, it seems to denote such lambs as, from their age or kind, were a special delicacy, comp. I Sam. 15.9 and Am. 6.4.

*breed of Bashan*] Bashan was celebrated for its cattle, see on 3.1.

*the kidney-fat of wheat*] i. e. the choicest and most nutritious wheat. Kidney-fat was considered the richest fat in animals, comp. Lev. 3.4 and Isa. 34.6; here it is used figuratively of wheat (Luzzatto).

*blood of the grape*] A figure depicting the red color of Palestinian grapes; similarly Gen. 49.11.

*thou drankest*] A sudden change to the second person, which is not unusual in Hebrew poetry. The Septuagint renders "he drank" for the sake of harmonization.

*foaming wine*] חמר (from a stem meaning "to ferment") is a rare poetical term, found only here and in Isa. 27.2.

#### 15-18. ISRAEL'S DEFECTION FROM GOD.

15. Preceding this verse in the Samaritan and the Septuagint is the following phrase: "And Jacob ate and was full", which some commentators take as an original part of the text (Klostermann et al.), but which is really superfluous and overloads the verse with unnecessary verbiage.

- 15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked —  
 Thou didst wax fat, thou didst grow thick, thou didst  
 become gross —  
 And he forsook God who made him,

*Jeshurun*] A poetical name for Israel, both containing the element ישר "upright" (Ibn Ezra). The term is always laudatory, except here where it is used in a disparaging manner.

*waxed fat, and kicked*] Instead of being docile and obedient in return for the great bounties bestowed upon it, Israel became rebellious against God. For the expressions comp. I Sam. 2.29 and Jer. 5.28.

*didst wax fat, etc.*] As in the preceding verse, there is a change to the second person, probably to lend the address a more personal and impassioned tone.

*didst grow thick*] The same verb occurs also in I Kings 12.10 = II Chron. 10.10. The term is used here in both a physical and moral sense (Luzzatto).

*didst become gross*] The verb כָּשָׂה is a hapax legomenon of uncertain connotation. The ancient versions render "gained riches", which is nothing more than a conjecture from the context, unless the word is derived from the Syriac stem כָּשָׂה "to collect." Some medieval commentators explained the word from Job 15.27 as "he covered", namely with fat (Rashi and others quoted by Ibn Ezra). Modern commentators prefer to derive it from an Arabic root *kashaa*, "to eat greedily" (especially cucumbers), which in the passive denotes "to be gorged", namely with food. Some endeavor to emend the word, as, e. g., Graetz, who suggests נָשָׂה "becamest sleek" in view of Jer. 5.28 (so Revised Version). Our rendering "gross" is employed in a double sense, physical and moral, viz. unusually large and plump, excessively fat, and also dull and stupid (Luzzatto). The accumulation of synonyms in this passage is for sheer emphasis and is paralleled elsewhere in the Bible, comp., for instance, Isa. 8.15. For the asyndetic construction see Judg. 5.27.

*God*] אֱלֹהִים, singular of אֱלֹהִים, though common in Arabic and Aramaic, is not so frequent in Hebrew, where it is chiefly poetical.

*who made him*] Comp. above v. 6.

And contemned the Rock of his salvation.

They roused Him to jealousy with strange gods, 16

With abominations did they provoke Him.

They sacrificed unto demons, no-gods, 17

Gods that they knew not,

New gods that came up of late,

Which your fathers dreaded not.

*contemned*] Literally "regarded or treated as a נבל (an immoral or irreligious person), namely with contumely (BDB., s. v.).

*the Rock of his salvation*] So II Sam. 22.47; Ps. 89.27; 91.1. On "rock" see above v. 4.

16. *They roused Him to jealousy, etc.*] Similarly Ps. 78.58. On God being jealous, see 4.24.

*strange gods*] Probably gods imported from foreign lands, comp. Jer. 2.25 and 3.13, see also above on v. 12.

*abominations*] The term is used chiefly of idolatrous practices, comp. 18.9; 20.18, etc. Here the reference may be to the idols themselves (so Ibn Ezra), comp. II Kings 23.13; Isa. 44.19.

17. *They sacrificed unto demons*] שדים occurs once more in Ps. 106.37 ("they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons"). The precise meaning of the word is not known, but it is generally regarded as a loan-word from Assyrian *shedu*, a protecting spirit figured in the bull-colossus that guarded the entrance to the temple (comp. Driver's note ad loc.). Etymologically, the word is probably similar to the Arabic *sayyid* meaning "lord, master, prince" and must have formed the title of some subordinate spirit, demi-god, or genius, invested with power for good or evil. Only in a later period did the word acquire the exclusive meaning "evil spirit".

*no-gods*] A pregnant Hebrew idiom characterizing the demon as the negation of deity, comp. similar combinations below v. 21 and see above on v. 5.

*they knew not*] Comp. 11.28; 13.7; 29.25.

*New gods, etc.*] i. e. gods that have not been tested as to their worth.

*dreaded not*] Similarly Jer. 2.12; Ezek. 27.35 and 32.10 (Sifre, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, etc.). Another interpretation is "perceived not", apparently based on the Arabic root *sha'ara* "to perceive, know" and the Aramaic *sa'ara* "to inspect, keep an eye on" (Septuagint, W. R. Smith, Barth).



- 18 Of the Rock that begot thee thou wast unmindful,  
And didst forget God that bore thee.
- 19 And the LORD saw, and spurned,  
Because of the provoking of His sons and His daughters.
- 20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them,  
I will see what their end shall be;  
For they are a very froward generation,  
Children in whom is no faithfulness.

18. *Rock*] See above on v. 4.

*begot thee*] God is represented here and in the next phrase as a parent giving birth to Israel as a nation.

*thou wast unmindful*] Construing עָשִׂיתָ as עָשִׂיתָ and deriving it from עָשָׂה "to forget" (so Rashi, Ibn Ezra, RSbM, et al.). The final *yod* and the vocalization as if it were a jussive in pause are inexplicable.

*that bore thee*] Properly "that writhed in travail with thee", a figure used of a parturient woman. The same pregnant figure is applied to God in Ps. 90.2.

#### 19-25. GOD'S VENGEANCE UPON UNGRATEFUL ISRAEL.

19. *spurned*] So Jer. 14.21.

*His sons and His daughters*] It is uncommon to mention daughters together with sons in relation to God (the only exception is Isa. 43.6), since the latter generally include the former; but perhaps the speaker wished to stress the idolatrous inclinations of the women and their pagan propensities, in which they excelled the men, comp., e. g., Jer. 44.15 ff. and Ezek. 8.14 (RMbN).

20. *I will hide My face*] i. e. withdraw My favor from them, comp. 31.17.

*a very froward generation*] Properly "a perverse generation," or rather "a generation of perverse utterances, prevarications and down-right lies", comp. Prov. 2.12, and elsewhere (Luzzatto, Driver, Ehrlich, et al.).

They have roused Me to jealousy with a no-god; 21  
 They have provoked Me with their vanities;  
 And I will rouse them to jealousy with a no-people;  
 I will provoke them with a vile nation.  
 For a fire is kindled in My nostril, 22  
 And burneth unto the depths of the nether-world,  
 And devoureth the earth with her produce,  
 And setteth ablaze the foundations of the mountains.

21. *They have roused Me, etc.*] Comp. vv. 16 f. There will be a just retribution: as they have provoked My jealousy through worshiping a no-god, I shall provoke their anger by exposing them to the mercy of a no-people, i. e. a savage, undisciplined horde, which does not belong to the society of civilized nations. Speculation as to what people the speaker may have had in mind is futile, since very likely he had no definite people in view and simply used a general designation for any possible future enemy of Israel—Philistines, Midianites, Aramaeans, etc.

*vanities*] הבל, literally "vapor, breath", is employed figuratively for what is evanescent, unsubstantial, worthless, such as idols, comp. Jer. 10.15; 16.19, and elsewhere.

*a vile nation*] i. e. an immoral and irreligious nation, having no regard for God or man. The same expression is found also in Ps. 74.18. For the cognate verb, comp. above v. 15.

22. *a fire is kindled, etc.*] i. e. an all-devouring jealousy consumes Me in view of Israel's idolatry (Ibn Ezra). The same phrase occurs in Jer. 15.14 and 17.4.

*the depths of the nether-world*] Similarly Ps. 86.13. שְׁאוֹל is the antithesis of "heaven" (Am. 9.2), hence "underworld"; its etymology is uncertain. חַחֲחִית may be either an adjective or a noun; here it seems to be used as a noun. Together these words designate "the nethermost depths", to which God's wrath penetrates.

*produce*] So 11.17.

*the foundations of the mountains*] So Ps. 18.8.

- 23 I will heap evils upon them;  
 I will spend Mine arrows upon them;  
 24 The wasting of hunger, and the devouring of the fiery bolt,

23. *I will heap*] Deriving the unusual Hebrew form הִקְפֵּץ from the stem קָפַץ "gather", comp. Mic. 4.6 (so Septuagint, Vulgate, Peshitta). Others derive it from קָפַץ, rendering "I will add", see Ezek. 5.16 (Rashi, Dillmann, Driver, Buhl). Still others take it as a Hiph'il of סָפַף "sweep or snatch away", rendering "I shall exhaust all the evils on them", which constitutes a suitable parallel to the following "I will spend" (Ibn Janah, Ibn Ezra, Ehrlich).

*spend*] Literally "finish", i. e. all My arrows will be used on them.

24. *The wasting of hunger*] Construing the hapax legomenon קִי as a construct of an abstract noun קִי derived from an Arabic root *mazza* meaning "to drain, suck out" (BDB., s. v.). Some of the ancient versions render "destroyed by hunger" (Aquila, Vulgate, Peshitta), others "swollen by hunger" (Targum, so also Rashi). Medieval commentators translate "burned by hunger", comparing the Aramaic מִזָּה in Dan. 3.19 (Ibn Ezra, Kimhi, similarly Luzzatto). Of emendations of the Hebrew text the following may be mentioned: רָץ "emaciated by hunger" (Graetz), and קָטָה "death from starvation", comparing Jer. 16.4 and Ezek. 28.8 (Ehrlich). As conceded by Ehrlich, the puzzling word is better taken as a noun than as a participle. Famine was considered a terrible calamity, and is often invoked by the prophets as God's judgment against Israel.

*the devouring of the fiery bolt*] Taking לִקְחֵי likewise as an abstract noun, derived from a root לָחַם "to eat", a poetical synonym of אָכַל. Others construe it as a passive participle meaning "consumed" (ancient versions, Ibn Ezra, et al.). רֶשֶׁת "flame" is a poetical designation of God's fire-bolt, which in the popular imagination brought pestilence and death to the people on earth. Comp. Hab. 3.5, "Before Him goeth the pestilence, and the fiery bolts go forth at His feet". The ancient versions, and following them the medieval commentators, took the word to denote some bird, relying probably on the traditional interpretation of Job 5.7.

And bitter destruction;  
 And the teeth of beasts will I send upon them,  
 With the venom of crawling things of the dust.  
 Without shall the sword bereave,  
 And in the chambers terror;  
 Slaying both young man and virgin,  
 The suckling with the man of gray hairs.

25

I thought I would make an end of them,  
 I would make their memory cease from among men;

26

*bitter destruction*] The phrase is used of a dreadful pestilence or epidemic, comp. Ps. 91.6, where קטב is parallel to "pestilence".

*the teeth of beasts*] An allusion to the destruction wrought by evil beasts, comp. Lev. 26.6; Ezek. 5.17, etc.

*crawling things of the dust*] Similarly Mic. 7.17. The same plague is threatened in Jer. 8.17.

25. *Without shall the sword bereave, etc.*] A vivid description of the terrors of war, paralleled in Lam. 1.20.

*in the chambers*] The Hebrew has מחדרים, which is probably a poetical variation of מבית, meaning "on the side of the house = within", comp. Ezek. 7.15 (Driver).

*slaying*] Not found in the Hebrew, but necessary to connect the following clause with "sword".

### 26-33. THE STAY OF GOD'S VENGEANCE.

26. *I would make an end of them*] Construing אפאיהם as a denominative verb of פאה "side, corner", comp. Luzzatto's rendering "I shall destroy their remainder" (so also Saadya according to one manuscript). Most of the medieval commentators associated it with פאה in one way or another (Targum Yerushalmi, Dunash ben Labrat, Kimhi, Rashi, "I shall scatter them into corners", etc.). One ancient tradition combined it with אף "anger" (Samaritan, Targum, Sifre); another interpreted it as consisting of three elements: אף אי הם "yea, where are they" (Aquila, Vulgate, Peshitta). Of modern commentators, some derive it from an Arabic root *faa* meaning "to cleave, split" (Schultens et al.),

- 27 Were it not that I dreaded the enemy's provocation,  
Lest their adversaries should misdeem,  
Lest they should say: Our hand is exalted,  
And not the LORD hath wrought all this.'
- 28 For they are a nation void of counsel,  
And there is no understanding in them.
- 29 If they were wise, they would understand this,  
They would discern their latter end.

others relate it to the stem פָּחַ with a supposed meaning "to blow away" (Gesenius, Ewald, Dillmann, et al.). An emendation to אֶפְצִים "I shall scatter them" has been suggested by Graetz on the basis of the Septuagint rendering, but this is very doubtful.

*I would make their memory cease, etc.*] Comp. 25.19; Ps. 34.17; 109.15; Job 18.17.

27. *I dreaded*] An anthropopathism.

*their adversaries should misdeem*] i. e. should ascribe their victories over Israel to themselves or their gods instead of to Me (Rashi). נִקְרִי means literally "treat as foreign", i. e. fail to recognize, comp. Jer. 19.4 and Job 21.29.

*Our hand is exalted*] Similarly Isa. 26.11.

*not the Lord, etc.*] But some one else, namely the enemy or their gods. The negative is placed before "Lord" and not before the verb, as usual, in order to stress the negation of the Lord as the author of Israel's ruin.

*wrought*] בָּרַךְ is a word used in poetry of the manifestation of divine power, comp. Num. 23.23, and elsewhere.

28-33. According to medieval Jewish and some modern commentators, these verses have reference to the arrogant enemy, not to Israel, as understood by Driver and others.

28. *void of counsel*] i. e. of all possible counsel, as proved by the plural in Hebrew.

29. *they would understand this*] viz. that God humbled and chastised Israel because of its sins and transgressions.

*they would discern their latter end*] They would comprehend that their ultimate fate will be the same as that of Israel, that inevitably

How should one chase a thousand, 30  
 And two put ten thousand to flight,  
 Except their Rock had given them over,  
 And the LORD had delivered them up?  
 For their rock is not as our Rock, 31  
 Even our enemies themselves being judges.  
 For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, 32  
 And of the fields of Gomorrah;  
 Their grapes are grapes of gall,

disaster will overtake them on account of their arrogance and many sins (Ibn Ezra). The same figure occurs also in Ps. 73.17.

30. If they were wise they would further understand how it came about that one of their warriors chased a thousand Israelites, etc. This anomaly was not due to God's inability to defend His people, but rather to His decision to cast them off on account of their disobedience.

*Rock*] i. e. God, see above on v. 4.

*had given them over*] Literally "sold them", similarly Judg. 2.14; 3.8; 4.9; 10.7, and elsewhere.

31. *their rock*] i. e. their god or gods, see above on v. 4.

*Even our enemies, etc.*] A circumstantial clause, comp. Driver, *Tenses*, pp. 197 ff. פלילים "arbiters, umpires, judges" occurs also in Ex. 21.22 and Job 31.11. The sense of the verse is that even our enemies have to admit that their god is not as mighty as our God and that therefore he could not be the author of Israel's ruin. Accordingly, this verse, which has no close connection with what precedes nor with what follows, must be taken as an aside, a parenthetical remark of the poet called forth by "their rock" in the preceding verse.

32. *their vine, etc.*] A rhetorical figure expressing forcibly the thought that the foes of Israel are of a corrupt stock, immoral and irreligious, just as the flora of Sodom and Gomorrah, and everything relating to these cities of the Plain, was tainted by moral corruption and wickedness and consequently was doomed to destruction.

*fields*] שדמה is a rare word of uncertain etymology, used largely in poetry. No doubt it is used here on account of its assonance with Sodom.

*grapes of gall*] i. e. their deeds are wicked deeds (Sforzo). שר

- Their clusters are bitter;  
 33 Their wine is the venom of serpents,  
 And the cruel poison of asps.  
 34 'Is not this laid up in store with Me,  
 Sealed up in My treasures?  
 35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense,

(always written **אש** except here) is a bitter and poisonous herb, hence "venom", see on 29.17.

*their clusters are bitter*] Literally "clusters of bitterness"; the plural **קלר** has an intensive force.

33. *serpents*] Including both sea-monsters and land-reptiles, whose venom is deadly.

*asps*] **פחן**, like the parallel **תנין** (parallel also in Ps. 91.13), is a venomous serpent, either "cobra" or "asp", the hooded variety, whose habitat is in Egypt, lower Syria, and the downs south of Beersheba (Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*<sup>10</sup>, p. 275).

### 34-43. COMPASSION ON ISRAEL AND VENGEANCE UPON ITS FOES.

34. *Is not this*] viz. the moral corruption of Israel's foes, characterized above as the vine of Sodom, grapes of gall, the venom of serpents and the cruel poison of asps.

*laid up in store*] **קָנָם** is a hapax legomenon of unknown etymology. Some commentators believe that this word constitutes a corruption of **קָנָם** "collected" (comp. Ps. 33.7, and elsewhere), which suits here very well and seems to be expressed by the ancient versions (comp. Driver ad loc.).

*Sealed up in My treasures*] The same figure for binding up or sealing sins in a bag is used in Hos. 13.12 and Job 14.17. On God's treasures comp. 28.12; Jer. 10.13, etc.

35. *Vengeance is Mine*] Properly "Mine is vengeance", with emphasis on the pronoun. God's vengeance finds expression also in vv. 41 and 43, and frequently in the Prophets. The Targumim, as usual, obviate the anthropopathism by rendering "catastrophe" instead

Against the time when their foot shall slip;  
 For the day of their calamity is at hand,  
 And the things that are to come upon them shall  
 make haste.

For the LORD will judge His people,  
 And repent Himself for His servants;  
 When He seeth that their stay is gone,

36

of "vengeance". Of considerable interest is the reading of the Samaritan and the Septuagint versions "against the day of vengeance", implying ליום instead of לי (comp. Isa. 34.8; 61.2; 63.4; Jer. 46.10), which goes very well with the preceding and following clause and, in the opinion of some critics (Geiger, Dillmann, Klostermann, et al.), is very probably the original reading. The change could easily be explained on the basis of abbreviations used in ancient manuscripts of the Bible.

*recompense*] מלץ, a noun of unusual formation, see above on v. 5.

*Against the time*] i. e. so soon as.

*when their foot shall slip*] A relative clause after "time", as Jer. 49.8; 50.31; 51.33. Slipping of the foot is a metaphor for a reverse of fortune, comp. Ps. 38.17; 94.18, and elsewhere.

*the day of their calamity*] A more potent expression than "day of reckoning", designating the day of disaster which ultimately overtakes the goddess and the infidels, comp. Jer. 18.17; 46.21, etc.

*the things that are to come*] i. e. the evils and calamities being prepared for them.

*shall make haste*] In the Hebrew text the predicate precedes the subject, hence the third person singular masculine (GKC., § 145o).

36. *will judge*] i. e. favorably. דין here denotes "plead the cause of", or "vindicate someone" against his foes, as in Gen. 30.6; Ps. 54.3; Prov. 31.9.

*repent Himself, etc.*] Similarly Ps. 90.13. Both this and the preceding clause are found verbatim in Ps. 135.14.

*their stay is gone*] Literally "hand (i. e. power, support) is gone". חזל is rare in Hebrew and mostly poetical, while it is common in Aramaic. The ending of the third perf. fem. in נ instead of ת is likewise rare in Hebrew, though prevalent in Aramaic (GKC., § 44 f).



And there is none remaining, shut up or left at large.

- 37 And it is said: Where are their gods,  
The rock in whom they trusted;  
38 Who did eat the fat of their sacrifices,  
And drank the wine of their drink-offering?  
Let him rise up and help you,  
Let him be your protection.

*shut up or left at large*] עָצוּר וְעוֹבֵד, an alliterative stereotyped phrase occurring also in I Kings 14.10; 21.21; II Kings 9.8 and 14.26, the exact sense of which cannot be determined, but which is taken in a general way to denote "all and everybody" (for a similar formula comp. 29.18). The ancient versions are confused, their renderings being largely guess-work; nor do the medieval exegetes render any assistance. The most common interpretation is "imprisoned and released" (Saadya), which also underlies our version; other renderings are "bond and free" (Gesenius, et al.), "kept in (i. e. restrained by legal impurity from entering the sanctuary, comp. Jer. 36.5 and Neh. 6.10) and at large" (Ewald, W. R. Smith, et al.), "under and over age" (Thenius and others), "married and celibate" (Keil and others), "confined (at home by age or weakness) and free" (to move about, i. e. able-bodied warriors, so Oettli), "one having relations and one not having relations" (Yahuda). For a criticism of some of these renderings comp. Driver's note ad loc.

37. *And it is said*] Construing the verb impersonally: one will say (so Ehrlich). Whether the reference is to God or to the enemy it is difficult to tell with any degree of certainty. Some claim it refers to God (Rashi, Sforzo, Driver, et al.); others maintain that it refers to the enemy (Saadya, Ibn Ezra, RSbM, RMbN, Luzzatto, etc.). The latter view seems to be more reasonable: when Israel's distress shall be at its greatest, its enemies will say tauntingly: where are their gods? why do they not help them? Similarly Judg. 10.14; Jer. 2.28; Ps. 115.2.

*rock*] See above on v. 4.

*they trusted*] Properly "sought shelter, took refuge". The verb is used frequently in the Psalms; on its form comp. GKC., § 75u.

38. *their drink-offering*] נִסְיָכָם is generally taken in the sense of נִסְכָּם (so Samaritan).

See now that I, even I, am He, 39  
 And there is no god with Me;  
 I kill, and I make alive;  
 I have wounded, and I heal;  
 And there is none that can deliver out of My hand.  
 For I lift up My hand to heaven, 40  
 And say: As I live for ever,  
 If I whet My glittering sword, 41  
 And My hand take hold on judgment;  
 I will render vengeance to Mine adversaries,

39. *See now that I, even I, etc.*] The poet makes God resume the direct address to the people. The repetition of the personal pronoun is to indicate the passion and fervor of God's address, similarly Isa. 43.11, 25; 51.12; Hos. 5.14.

*I am He*] A formula asserting the reality and existence of God in contrast to the insentient idols of the heathen; similarly Isa. 41.4; 43.10, 13; 46.4; 48.12.

*there is no god with Me*] An emphatic declaration of monotheism, similarly 4.35, 39.

*I kill, etc.*] So I Sam. 2.6; II Kings 5.7.

*I have wounded, etc.*] So Isa. 19.22; 30.26; Hos. 6.1; Job 5.18.

*that can deliver, etc.*] So Isa. 43.13; Job 10.7.

40. *I lift up My hand*] viz. to take a solemn oath, comp. Gen. 14.22; Ex. 6.8; Num. 14.30, etc. This figure is applied to God anthropomorphically.

*As I live for ever*] A variation of the usual formula for an oath, comp. Num. 14.21, 28; Isa. 49.18; Jer. 22.24, etc.

41. *My glittering sword*] Literally "the lightning of My sword", a striking figure for a sharpened weapon; similarly Ezek. 21.15; Nah. 3.3; Hab. 3.11. God is represented here as a mighty warrior getting ready for a decisive combat with His enemies, who are also Israel's enemies.

*take hold on judgment*] i. e. henceforth I institute stern judgment instead of mercy towards the enemy (Rashi, Luzzatto). Another comment is that the sword is naturally the arbiter in war (Ibn Ezra).

*vengeance*] See above on v. 35.

And will recompense them that hate Me.

- 42 I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood,  
And My sword shall devour flesh;  
With the blood of the slain and the captives,  
From the long-haired heads of the enemy.'

- 43 Sing aloud, O ye nations, of His people;  
For He doth avenge the blood of His servants,

**42.** A description of the bloody combat between God and His enemies (comp. Isa. 34.5 f.; 63.3 ff.; Jer. 25.30 ff.; 46.10, etc.).

*Mine arrows*] Which were directed formerly against Israel, comp. above v. 23.

*drunk with blood*] viz. of the enemy.

*My sword shall devour*] So II Sam. 2.26 and 11.25.

*captives*] See on 21.11. Evidently prisoners of war were slain after the combat.

*the long-haired heads*] Literally "head of flowing locks", comp. פֶּרַע "loose locks" in Num. 6.5 and Ezek. 44.20 (so Schultens, Knobel, Keil, W. R. Smith, Driver, et al.). The hirsute adornment was no doubt a mark of exceptional strength and vigor in the Orient, perhaps a sign of a vow made by warriors to consecrate themselves to the grim art of war. Another translation of פֶּרַע is "leaders", deriving it from an Arabic root *fara'a* denoting "to surpass, excel" (Schultz, Dillmann, et al., following the Septuagint). Kimhi's "revenge", based upon the connotation of the word in Aramaic, seems to be unsuitable here.

**43.** Conclusion of the Song of Moses, calling upon the nations to sing the praises of Israel because it possesses such an omnipotent God.

*Sing aloud, etc.*] Following the Vulgate, Targum, Peshitta, Saadya, Rashi, RMbN, Ibn Ezra, etc. Though, strictly speaking, הֲרִינִן means "cause to shout" (for joy), comp., e. g., Ps. 65.9 and Job 29.13, it may also denote simply "shout", like the primary Kal conjugation, comp. Ps. 32.11 and 81.2 (so Aquila, Theodotion, J. D. Michaelis, Ewald). Driver considers it best to construe the Hiph'il as Pi'el (comp. Ps. 51.16; 59.17) and to treat "His people" as the object of the verb.

*avenge the blood of His servants*] The same expression in II Kings 9.7 and Ps. 79.10.

And doth render vengeance to His adversaries,  
And doth make expiation for the land of His people.

And Moses came and spoke all the words of this song <sup>44</sup>  
in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.  
And when Moses made an end of speaking all these words <sup>45</sup>  
to all Israel, he said unto them: 'Set your heart unto all <sup>46</sup>  
the words wherewith I testify against you this day; that  
ye may charge your children therewith to observe to do  
all the words of this law. For it is no vain thing for you; <sup>47</sup>  
because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall

*make expiation, etc.*] Namely by meting out proper punishment to offenders, both Israelites and their heathen enemies, who pollute the land of Israel in one way or another.

*the land of His people*] Following the Samaritan, Septuagint and Vulgate. The Hebrew text reads "His land, His people", an asyndeton which sounds unnatural.

44. Concluding note, repeating the statement of 31.30.

*came and spoke*] This phrase implies that some instructions had previously been given elsewhere, comp. Gen. 47.1; Ex. 19.7; 24.3 (Driver, following Klostermann).

*Hoshea*] So also Num. 13.8 and 16, but elsewhere always Joshua. The Samaritan, Septuagint, Vulgate and Peshitta exhibit here, too, the ordinary name Joshua.

#### 45-47. FINAL APPEAL TO ISRAEL TO OBEY THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW.

45. *all these words*] i. e. all the discourses comprised within the Book of Deuteronomy.

*all Israel*] So 1.1.

46. *Set your heart unto*] i. e. pay attention to, the heart being the seat of understanding. This idiom is common in the Bible, comp., e. g., Ex. 9.21; I Sam. 9.20; Ezek. 40.4.

*I testify, etc.*] Comp. 8.19.

*ye may charge your children, etc.*] Similarly 6.7; 11.19; 31.13.

47. *vain*] Properly "empty", i. e. without profit or advantage.  
*it is your life, etc.*] Similarly 30.20.

prolong your days upon the land, whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it.'

- 48 And the LORD spoke unto Moses that selfsame day,  
 49 saying: 'Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, unto  
 mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over  
 against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I  
 50 give unto the children of Israel for a possession; and die  
 in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto  
 thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and

**48-52. MOSES IS COMMANDED TO VIEW CANAAN  
 BEFORE HIS DEATH.**

This passage is a repetition and expansion of Num. 27.12-14.

48. *that selfsame day*] i. e. the day on which the song was recited (Ibn Ezra), or the day fixed in 1.3 (Driver).

49. *Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim*] Exactly as in Num. 27.12; comp. also *ibid.* 33.47 f., where the mountains of Abarim, in front of Nebo, are said to have been the last station of the Israelites before they reached the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. Evidently Abarim (denoting "the regions beyond") was the name given to the range of mountains east of the Jordan, of which Nebo constituted a particular ridge. Comp. George Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*,<sup>13</sup> pp. 548 and 553.

*unto mount Nebo . . . against Jericho*] Wanting in the parallel statement of Num. 27.12. Comp. below 34.1.

*for a possession*] Elsewhere we find "for an inheritance" (4.21; 19.10, etc.).

50. *be gathered unto thy people*] The same idiom is employed also in Num. 27.13, and elsewhere. Another rendering of the phrase is "unto thy father's kin", the original meaning of *ny*, which is still retained in Arabic (Driver, following Wellhausen).

*mount Hor*] So Num. 20.22 ff.; 21.4; 33.37 ff. The site of this mountain is unknown. Tradition places it near Petra (Josephus, Jerome, Eusebius), where indeed there is a peak named Jebel Nebi Harun. Another conjecture identifies it with the modern Jebel Madurah, a mountain north-east of Kadesh and a short distance south of the

was gathered unto his people. Because ye trespassed <sup>51</sup> against Me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribath-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel. For thou shalt see the land afar off; but thou <sup>52</sup> shalt not go thither into the land which I give the children of Israel.'

Dead Sea (Trumbull, *Kadesh-Barnea*, pp. 127 ff.). Contrast 10.6, where Aaron is said to have died at Moserah: very likely it was an insignificant locality in the neighborhood of mount Hor.

51. *ye trespassed*] Instead of "ye rebelled" in Num. 27.14. *על* properly denotes "act unfaithfully, treacherously".

*at the waters of Meribath-kadesh*] So Num. 27.14; Ezek. 47.19; 48.28. The incident of the waters of Meribath-kadesh (the contention of Kadesh), or more briefly the waters of Meribah, is related in Num. 20.1 ff.; comp. also below 33.8; Ps. 81.8 and 106.32.

*the wilderness of Zin*] Its exact site is unknown, but it is clear that it was the region in which Kadesh was situated, comp. particularly Num. 33.36.

*sanctified Me not*] So Num. 20.12 and 27.14. Note the assonance between the Hebrew verb and Kadesh.

52. *afar off*] Literally "from in front", i. e. at a distance, so 28.66; II Kings 2.15; 3.22; 4.25.

## CHAPTER 33.

### THE BLESSING OF MOSES.

This poem, couched in an archaic lapidary style, consists of three distinct parts: an introduction (vv. 2–5), the blessings according to the tribes (vv. 6–25), and a conclusion (vv. 26–29). Its primary aim appears to be to proclaim the prowess and prosperity of the Israelite tribes (with a few exceptions), due to their special relationship to God. In a general way, the blessings here resemble the blessings of Jacob in Gen. 49.1–27, which are likewise arranged according to the tribes. Only here the sequence of the tribes varies considerably, and the tribe

of Simeon is wanting altogether. Another striking characteristic here is the picture of the powerful tribe of Judah in narrow straits, isolated from his people and buffeted by enemies. Moreover, the blessings here are wholly eulogistic, while there they are also minatory; the tenor here is theocratic throughout, while there it is largely secular; and, finally, the atmosphere here is peaceful and tranquil, as becomes a more or less settled and cultivated people, while there it is entirely primitive and smacking of strife. Hence nobody doubts that the Blessing of Moses is considerably later than the Blessing of Jacob. The question is: Is the Blessing of Moses a product of Israel's lawgiver? In contrast to the affirmative of Jewish tradition the modern school of Pentateuchal criticism answers this question in the negative for the following reasons: 1) it is not likely that v. 4 ("Moses commanded us a law") was written by Moses; 2) vv. 27 f. appear to look back to the conquest of Palestine as an accomplished fact; 3) vv. 19 ff. describe special events and conditions which are known to have taken place during and after the conquest of Canaan; 4) the silence concerning the tribe of Simeon, which was active during the conquest, presupposes a period when that tribe became absorbed in the tribe of Judah, which was not before the period of Judges (1.3). Yet, it is generally admitted by the critics, everything in Moses' Blessing breathes high antiquity and fresh and vigorous power. The tribes seem to be in secure possession of their provinces, except that Reuben is near extinction, Simeon had disappeared, and Judah is isolated and surrounded by enemies. Consequently there is a tendency among the critics to date the composition of Moses' Blessing in one of the happier periods of the earlier kingdom, either in the reign of Jeroboam I, about 940-922 (Schrader, Dillmann, Driver, and others), or in that of Jeroboam II, 783-743 (Graf, Kuenen, Stade, Cornill, Moore, and others). Some advance it to the period of Judges (Kleinert, et al.). From the sympathy shown for the northern tribes, especially from the glowing eulogy of the tribe of Joseph and the brief mention of the tribe of Judah, it is deduced that the author was a resident of the northern kingdom. There is also a plausible opinion that the Blessing, like all other ancient poems, does not belong to a particular time or to an individual author, but is composite in character, containing elements from different periods and by various authors, which in course of time were commingled and combined by the dexterous hand of a compiler or editor for the delectation of future generations (George Adam Smith). This was a common trait in the transmission of poetry among all Semitic tribes, and it is still in vogue among the Arabs.

And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of **33**  
 God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And <sup>2</sup>  
 he said:

The LORD came from Sinai,  
 And rose from Seir unto them;  
 He shined forth from mount Paran,

### 1. SUPERScription

*the man of God*] A term used of messengers of God (Judg. 13.6, 8) or of prophets and seers (I Sam. 2.27; 9.6, etc.); applied to Moses also in Josh. 14.6 and Ps. 90.1.

### 2-5. INTRODUCTION, DEPICTING THE THEOPHANY ON SINAI AND THE RISE OF ISRAEL AS A THEOCRATIC NATION.

2. *The Lord came from Sinai*] The word "came" here is synonymous with the parallel "rose" and "shined forth", hence it denotes "He made His appearance, or revealed Himself, out of Sinai". Jewish tradition is unanimous in referring this statement to the theophany on Sinai, Ibn Ezra going even so far as to make "from Sinai" equivalent to "on Sinai". For a contrary opinion comp. Luzzatto and Driver ad loc. Similar descriptions of the theophany occur in Judg. 5.4 f.; Hab. 3.3 ff.; Ps. 68.8 f.; 77.16 ff. On Sinai or Horeb and its disputed site see 1.2. Saadya construes the phrase as an invocation: "O Lord, who, etc.", but this construction is justly rejected by Ibn Ezra.

*rose from Seir*] The word *וָרָא*, used mostly of the rising sun shedding its luster over the horizon, is employed here figuratively of God, whose revelation was as dazzling as the rising of the sun. Seir is Edom, see on 1.2.

*unto them*] i. e. to the people of Israel. The Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate render "to us".

*He shined forth*] This expression is used of God also in Ps. 50.2; 80.2; 94.1, etc.

*mount Paran*] *פָּרָן* is to be taken collectively: "mountains of Paran", so Hab. 3.3. On Paran comp. 1.1. Apparently Sinai, Seir, and Paran were in close proximity to one another (Saadya quoted by Ibn Ezra). Yet the exact location of the mountain range of Paran is not known. Some identify it with Jebel Mugrah, some 2000 feet high, about 29



And He came from the myriads holy,  
At His right hand was a fiery law unto them.

miles south of Ain Kadis, 50 miles west and 130 miles north of Sinai (Palmer, *The Desert of the Exodus*, p. 510); others prefer to identify it with the range of hills extending in a north-eastern direction from Sinai, along the western side of the Aelanitic Gulf, towards Edom (Delitzsch on Hab. 3.3).

*He came*] אָהָה is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew בָּא used above and is employed chiefly in poetry (comp. below v. 21; Isa. 21.12; Jer. 3.22, etc.). Here it is used for an additional reason, namely to avoid the repetition of the same verb.

*from the myriads holy*] i. e. from His abode in heaven, where He is surrounded by hosts of angels, comp. I Kings 22.19, and elsewhere (so Aquila, Targum, Peshitta, Vulgate, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, etc.). Some prefer "with holy myriads", or "and with Him were holy myriads" (involving a slight emendation believed to be reflected in some of the ancient versions), or "and with Him were holy chariots" (reading מִרְכָּבָה instead of מִרְבֵּבָה, comp. Hab. 3.8 and Ps. 68.18). Luzzatto renders "from myriads of holy (places)". But modern commentators are not satisfied with any of these renderings. As stated by Driver ad loc., "a periphrasis for heaven is not a probable parallel to Sinai, Seir, and Paran; and the thought of Jehovah's coming forth from His heavenly abode (Mic. 1.3) should precede the three earthly localities: moreover, the angel hosts would be more naturally pictured as accompanying their Sovereign (Zech. 14.5; Ps. 68.18), than as left behind by Him in heaven". Hence, on the basis of the Septuagint's Kadesh instead of *kadosh* "holy", they read מִמֵּרִיבַת קֶדֶשׁ "from Meribath-kadesh", comp. 32.51 (Ewald, Dillmann, et al.), or "He came to Meribath-kadesh" (Wellhausen), or "from the steppes of Kadesh," reading מַעְרַבַת קֶדֶשׁ (Bottcher). On Kadesh and its probable site, comp. comment on 1.46.

*a fiery law*] Following the masoretic note that אֵשֶׁרָה is "written as one word, but must be read as two words", i. e. אֵשׁ דָּה "fire, law" (Aquila, Targum), or "fiery law" (Symmachus, Vulgate, Saadya, etc.). But it is maintained by many commentators that דָּה "law" is a Persian word occurring only in the latest books of the Bible (Esther, Daniel, and Ezra), hence it is out of place here. Many modern exegetes therefore follow the *Ketib*, reading either אֵשֶׁרָה "support" (for Israel), or אֵשֶׁרָה

- 3 Yea, He loveth the peoples,  
All His holy ones — they are in Thy hand;  
And they sit down at Thy feet,

"lightning-flashes", both based on Aramaic; similarly Luzzatto, who construes the word as singular of אֶסְדָּת הַפִּסְגָּה "the slopes of Pisgah" (comp. 3.17; 4.49). But some commentators also resort to emendation of the Hebrew text: thus Dillmann proposes either אֵשׁ לִפְדָּת "flashes of fire" or אֵשׁ יִקְרָח "a burning fire" (adopted by Driver, who refers to Hab. 3.3 f., where the theophany is described as accompanied by a flood of brilliant light).

3. *He loveth the peoples*] חָבַב is a participle with implicit subject, comp. Driver, *Tenses*,<sup>3</sup> p. 171. The ancient versions (Septuagint, Peshitta, Targum, and Vulgate) have the perfect. The word is a hapax legomenon in the Bible, though common in Arabic and Aramaic. Another interpretation is "He holds in His bosom", comp. Job 31.33 (RMbN, Luzzatto). עַמִּים generally denotes the heathen peoples, in which sense it is understood by RSbM and Sforino, but this sense hardly suits the context here; hence Jewish tradition, on the basis of Gen. 28.3; 48.4; Judg. 5.14, etc., takes it in the sense of "tribes" of Israel (so Targum, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, etc.). Modern commentators, following the Septuagint, do not hesitate to emend the word to "His people" (Dillmann, Oettli, Marti, Driver).

*His holy ones*] i. e. saints (Rashi), or Levites (Ibn Ezra, RMbN). Owing to the very harsh enallage of person involved in the following "Thy", modern commentators render "its holy ones", referring the pronoun to the emended "His people".

*in Thy hand*] So Samaritan and Septuagint; the so-called Lucianic text of the Septuagint has "in His hands", the Vulgate renders "in His hand", the Peshitta has "He blesses" (implying יְבָרֵךְ for בִּידֵךְ).

*sit down at Thy feet*] The Hebrew text is insurmountably difficult and defies comprehension. There is no root נָחַב with an appropriate meaning in any of the Semitic languages, and the ancient versions, like the later commentaries, simply guessed at its meaning, or else tacitly assumed a slightly different text. The Septuagint renders it paraphrastically "under Thee"; Aquila, "shaken or stricken at Thy feet", in the sense of נָחַב (so RMbN); Peshitta, "followed at Thy feet";

Receiving of Thy words.

- 4 Moses commanded us a law,  
An inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.  
5 And there was a king in Jeshurun,

Targum, "held communion under Thy clouds"; Vulgate, "came near to Thy feet"; Saadya, "go in Thy ways" (so Kimhi); Ibn Ezra, "were drawn to Thy feet"; Rashi connects it with חוץ "midst", rendering "they placed themselves in the midst of the lower part of mount Sinai"; Luzzatto associates it with Aramaic חכא "table", translating "they sit before Thee expecting Thy blessings as one sits at a table expecting food". The latter interpretation underlies our rendering. Gesenius and others render "reclined", on the basis of a dubious Arabic root; others "they wandered or traveled", likewise based on Arabic (comp. Driver ad loc.).

*Receiving of Thy words*] i.e. Thy laws and commandments (so ancient versions and medieval commentaries, except Ibn Ezra and RMBN who take the verb in the sense of "uttering"). The preformative ב of the substantive is partitive.

4. *Moses commanded us a law*] This verse must be construed as spoken by Israel (so Targum Yerushalmi, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Luzzatto, et al.), else it may be assumed to be a later gloss (so modern commentators).

*an inheritance*] מורשה is otherwise used of territorial possession only.  
*of the congregation of Jacob*] Or "to the congregation, etc." (Ibn Ezra, Driver; comp. GKC., § 119 hh). קהל occurs only here and in Neh. 5.7, elsewhere the briefer קהל is used.

5. *a king in Jeshurun*] God became king over Israel (Rashi and others), comp. Num. 23.21 and Isa. 33.22, where God is so named. Some take the reference to be to Moses, who ruled over Israel with the undisputed authority of a king (Ibn Ezra); others apply it metaphorically to the Torah, by which Israel was to be guided (Judah Halevi, quoted by Ibn Ezra ad loc.). Modern commentators of the historical-critical school suppose the reference to be to the recognition of Saul as king by united Israel (Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, Stade, Reuss, Cornill). On Jeshurun as an appellative for Israel, comp. comment on 32.15.

When the heads of the people were gathered,  
All the tribes of Israel together.

- 6 Let Reuben live, and not die  
In that his men become few.

*the heads of the people]* i. e. the leaders of Israel; so below v. 21.  
*were gathered]* viz. at Sinai, on the day of the assembly (comp. 9.10; 10.4, etc.).

*the tribes of Israel]* This serves as an appropriate link between the introduction and the blessings of the individual tribes.

*together]* In Hebrew the particle is placed at the beginning of the clause for emphasis; similarly Job 3.18; 16.10, etc.

#### 6-25. BLESSINGS OF THE INDIVIDUAL TRIBES.

6. *Let Reuben live]* Reuben being the first-born (Gen. 49.3), the blessing very appropriately begins with his progeny. The tribe of Reuben is pictured here in a very precarious condition, beset by enemies and struggling for existence, and a prayer is uttered for its preservation. This agrees with the actual history of this tribe, which gradually lost its territorial possessions across the Jordan and with them also its political influence, so that its name disappeared entirely from Israel's later annals. Comp. further Gen. 49.4, where Jacob in his blessing withholds excellency from Reuben for sins committed by him; also Judg. 5.15, where Deborah rebukes the tribe of Reuben for its failure to join the other tribes in their fight against the Canaanites.

*and not die]* Repetition of the first clause in different words for emphasis. Jewish tradition interpreted the first clause as referring to life in this world and the second clause as alluding to life in the world beyond (Sifre, Rashi).

*In that his men become few]* Taking the conjunctive of the verb as denoting "so that", so also Dillmann (comp. GKC., § 109 i, and Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 68). The verb is in the singular instead of the plural, comp. on 32.35. On מְנִי "men", see 4.27. The noun מִסְפָּר, literally "number", is used idiomatically for "numerable, few" (BDB., s. v.). The Septuagint, on the contrary, renders it "numerous"; the Peshitta, "in the muster", or "in the number" (of the other tribes), so also Rashi and RMbN. Some exegetes apply the negative of the preceding clause also

- 7 And this for Judah, and he said:  
Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,  
And bring him in unto his people;

to this clause, rendering "and let not his men be few" (Saadya, Ibn Ezra, Graf, Keil, and others), as I Sam. 2.3; Ps. 9.19; 35.19, etc. For a criticism of this view see Driver *ad loc.*

7. The tribe of Simeon is passed by, according to Jewish tradition (comp. Ibn Ezra *ad loc.*), because of its transgression in worshiping the Baal of Peor (Num. 25.3 ff.). Commentators of the historical-critical school advance another reason, namely the fact that this tribe was absorbed at an early date by the tribe of Judah, in whose vicinity it lived, so that it disappeared entirely from Israel's later annals (comp. Driver *ad loc.*). Some manuscripts of the Septuagint have Simeon inserted at the head of the second stich of v. 6, rendering "and Simeon shall be numerous", but this looks too much like a deliberate attempt to fill in a disturbing gap. Efforts were made also to reconstruct the masoretic text in such a way as to make it include a blessing for Simeon. Thus Graetz (*Geschichte der Juden*<sup>2</sup>, II 1 (1902), 450 f.), following one of the hermeneutical norms of Rabbi Eliezer that when a word does not suit a passage another word might be substituted for it, does not hesitate to read Simeon instead of Judah in both places of our verse. Heilprin (*Historical Poetry of the Hebrews*, I, 113 ff.), adopting Graetz's emendation and also a suggestion by Kaufmann Kohler (*Der Segen Jacob's*, p. 5) that v. 11, now part of Levi's blessing, belonged originally to the blessing of Judah, and that v. 7 ought to precede it, following v. 10, obtains as the blessing for Simeon, "Hear, Lord, the voice of Simeon, and bring him to his people" (v. 7a), and as the blessing for Judah, "Judah with his hands contends for himself, and thou art an help from his foes: Bless, Lord, his might, and accept the work of his hands, smite through in the loins those that rise up against him, and them that hate him, that they rise not again" (vv. 7b and 11).

*Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, etc.*] viz. in prayer and supplication (Rashi). The Targum interprets it as follows: "Hear, Lord, the prayer of Judah when he goeth forth to battle, and bring him back to his people in peace" (so Keil and others). It is clear that the tribe of Judah is pictured here in distress, isolated from its people, and appealing to God for succor. Whether this is an allusion to the period of Judges, when the tribe of Judah appears to have held aloof from the

His hands shall contend for him,  
And Thou shalt be a help against his adversaries.

And of Levi he said:

8

Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one,

rest of Israel (it is not even mentioned among the other tribes in the Song of Deborah), or to the later period after the disruption of the Kingdom, it is very difficult to say with any degree of certainty. Some adherents of the latter view believe that this verse constitutes a prayer by an Israelite of the northern kingdom for the reunion of the parted tribes. It is rightly contended, however, that in this case "bring him back" would be required instead of "bring him in". Contrast the glorifying picture of Judah in Jacob's blessing (Gen. 49.8 ff.).

*His hands shall contend for him*] The Hebrew construction is similar to that in Ps. 3.5; 17.13, etc. (comp. GKC., § 144m). This rendering is in agreement with the ancient versions and most commentaries, the sense being that the valorous tribe of Judah will lend its hand in the fight against its enemies and not rely entirely on God's assistance. Another rendering is "his hands shall be his defender", construing רב as a participle instead of a perfect (Luzzatto). Some derive the verb from a stem רבב "be sufficient", rendering "his own hands have sufficed for him" (Ibn Ezra and others). Finally, there are some who do not hesitate to emend the Hebrew text for the sake of a more logical construction, reading רב instead of רב and rendering "with Thy hands contend for him" (Dillmann, Stade, etc.).

8. An appeal to God to entrust the sacred lots, used by the priests in giving decisions, to the tribe of Levi, whose fidelity had been tested in the wilderness. Contrast the description of Levi in Jacob's blessing (Gen. 49.5 ff.).

*Thy Thummim and Thy Urim*] Elsewhere the order is reversed (Ex. 28.30; Lev. 8.8; Ezr. 2.63 = Neh. 7.65). The etymological meaning of תמים and אורים is not quite certain: they are generally rendered in a literal way "lights and perfections", but this rendering does not convey in the least the nature of the objects represented by these terms. From the biblical data we gather that they were some objects (perhaps stones) belonging to the ephod (shoulder-cape or mantle) of the high priest, put in the breastplate of judgment so as to be on the high priest's

- Whom Thou didst prove at Massah,  
 With whom Thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;  
 9 Who said of his father, and of his mother: 'I have not  
 seen him';

heart when he went in before the Lord. Through the Urim and Thummim (by manipulating them in some manner, perhaps by casting them like dice, as some suppose) the high priest was able to ascertain the will of God in doubtful cases and matters of moment. But this practice of divination was discontinued at an early date: at least there is no reference to it after the reign of David. Very likely it was superseded by the rising institution of prophecy, whose function was the same but whose form was more spiritual.

*Thy holy one*] i. e. Levi or the tribe of Levi, whose faithfulness to God was tested in the wilderness (so most commentaries). Another view is that the reference is to Moses, exactly as in the following clauses (Dillmann and others). חַסִּיד, "kindly, godly, pious", is a term used very frequently in the Psalms for a God-fearing man. Some commentators object to our phrase and prefer rendering, through a slight emendation, "the man who deserves and possesses Thy kindness" (Ehrlich and others).

*Thou didst prove at Massah, etc.*] These allusions are evidently to Moses and Aaron whom God tested at Massah and Meribah (comp. Ex. 17.1 ff. and Num. 20.2 ff., alluded to in our book 6.16; 9.22; 32.51) and as a consequence forbade them entrance into the promised land. Because of these severe tests and punishments meted out to the representatives of the tribe of Levi, the grace of God is invoked upon it and special privileges are asked for it as an intermediary between God and His people (comp. Ehrlich, who reflects here Jewish tradition). Others claim that this verse cannot refer to the known experiences at Massah and Meribah, from which the tribe of Levi emerged inglorious: they insist that the allusion must be to another proof of the tribe of Levi, not recorded elsewhere, from which that tribe came out with glory.

9. *Who said of his father, etc.*] An allusion to the incident of the golden calf (Ex., chapter 32), when the sons of Levi manifested their zeal for God by slaying their own relatives who were guilty of worshipping the calf (ibid. vv. 27 ff.) and were rewarded with the prerogative of the priesthood (comp. 10.8). Others take the verse more generally

Neither did he acknowledge his brethren,  
 Nor knew he his own children;  
 For they have observed Thy word,  
 And keep Thy covenant.  
 They shall teach Jacob Thine ordinances,  
 And Israel Thy law;  
 They shall put incense before Thee,  
 And whole burnt-offering upon Thine altar.

10

as a characterization of the Levites' office, which required abnegation of all family ties and a single-minded devotion to the service of God (J. D. Michaelis, Graf, Wellhausen, et al.). Comp. the Targum: "who has no compassion on his father and his mother when they are proved guilty by law, and regards not the persons of his brothers and sons".

*I have not seen him*] An expression indicating repudiation, similarly Job 8.18.

*word*] i. e. command.

*covenant*] See on 4.13.

10. This verse indicates the two primary functions of the priestly tribe: to instruct the people concerning the laws and the ordinances to be observed in the theocratic state, and to offer sacrifices to God at the sanctuary.

*ordinances*] i. e. decisions in civil and criminal causes (comp. Ex. 21.1).

*incense*] Meaning both "smoke of sacrifice" and "incense". Burning incense, which was a priestly duty (comp. Num. 16.6 ff.; 17.5; I Sam. 2.28), was a common and ancient practice in Palestine, as may be seen from the incense altar unearthed by Sellin at Taanach (dated 700 B. C. E.) and from a similar altar discovered by Macalister at Gezer (dated between 1000 and 600 B. C. E.). Comp. J. Garrow Duncan, *Digging Up Biblical History*, II, 96 ff.

*before Thee*] So Targum, etc., palliating the gross anthropomorphism of the Hebrew "in Thy nostril" (for similar figures, comp. Gen. 8.21; Lev. 26.31; Am. 5.21; Ps. 18.9, etc.).

*whole burnt-offering*] כֹּלֵל, common in Phoenician, is a sacrifice wholly consumed on the altar, a holocaust, hence equivalent to עֹלָה; see on 13.17.



- 11 Bless, LORD, his substance,  
And accept the work of his hands;  
Smite through the loins of them that rise up against him,  
And of them that hate him, that they rise not again.
- 12 Of Benjamin he said:  
The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him;

11. *his substance*] i. e. his material possessions (Sifre, Targum, Ibn Ezra, Sforzo, etc.). Since the tribe of Levi was very poor, without any estate or property, a prayer is offered for the provision of its material needs and sustenance, which came chiefly from offerings and tithes. Another rendering is "his might" (Septuagint, Vulgate, Graf, Keil, Dillmann, Driver, and others). Some translate "host, ranks" (RMbN, et al.).

*the work of his hands*] i. e. the sacrifices (Targum, Ibn Ezra, and others).

*Smite through the loins*] Properly "wound severely (32.39) as to the loins", comp. Ps. 3.8 and see above on 19.6 (GKC., § 117ll).

*that rise up against him*] So Ex. 15.7, etc.

*that they rise not again*] The Hebrew phrase is defective, lacking a relative particle before the verb (Ibn Ezra); it corresponds to קָנוּם in prose (Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 46). Whether this is a general statement or has reference to a particular occurrence is open to conjecture. It is thought by some that the phrase is an allusion to the rebellious Korahites (Num. 16.1 ff.), by others that it refers to I Kings 12.31 and so on.

12. The blessing of Benjamin. Contrast Jacob's blessing of Benjamin in Gen. 49.27.

*beloved of the Lord*] Similarly יְדִידָהּ is used of Solomon in II Sam. 12.25 and יְדִיד of all Israel in Jer. 11.15. No doubt Benjamin was given this intimate appellation because of Jacob's affection for him as the child of his old age (Gen. 44.20).

*by Him*] Wanting in the Samaritan and probably read differently by the Septuagint. It is maintained by modern commentators that this word is unnecessary and overburdens the line, that very likely it is a doublet of the same word in the following clause; but it should be remembered that its purpose is to indicate Benjamin's physical proximity to God, since his territory was contiguous to Jerusalem, in

He covereth him all the day,  
And He dwelleth between his shoulders.

And of Joseph he said:

13

Blessed of the LORD be his land;  
For the precious things of heaven, for the dew,  
And for the deep that coucheth beneath,

which the Temple—the dwelling place of God—was situated, and, according to Jewish tradition, the Temple itself was actually in Benjamin's territory (Targum, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, etc.).

*He covereth him*] i. e. God shelters and protects Benjamin through His presence in the Temple. חָפָה "enclose, surround, cover" (so in Arabic) is a hapax legomenon. On the omission of the subject, comp. GKC., § 116s.

*between his shoulders*] An allusion to the site of the Temple within the rocky border of Benjamin, close to Judah's boundary line, comp. Josh. 15.8; 18.16 and 28 (Targum, Rashi, Ewald, Dillmann, et al.). כְּתֵף, "shoulder, shoulder-blade", denotes also "slope, side" of a mountain (comp. BDB., s. v).

13-17. The blessing of Joseph, promising abundance of crops and military prowess, resembles in many points Jacob's blessing in Gen. 49.22 ff.

13. *For the precious things of heaven*] i. e. rain and dew, the choice products of heaven. מִנֵּר means "excellence", more particularly "choice fruits".

*for the dew*] Explanatory of "precious things of heaven"; but since rain is wanting as a customary concomitant of dew, many commentators are inclined to emend the word מִנֵּר to מֵעַל, "from above," in accordance with Gen. 49.25.

*the deep* i. e. the subterranean ocean, the source of springs and rivers which fructify the earth. The word is sometimes compared to the Babylonian *Tiamat*, a mythical gigantic monster personifying the ocean, hence perhaps the term "coucheth", used largely of animals (see on 29.19).

- 14 And for the precious things of the fruits of the sun,  
 And for the precious things of the yield of the moons,  
 15 And for the tops of the ancient mountains,  
 And for the precious things of the everlasting hills,  
 16 And for the precious things of the earth and the  
 fulness thereof,  
 And the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush;  
 Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph,

14. *the fruits of the sun*] i. e. the crops of the fields and the vineyards ripened or sweetened by the sun (Rashi, Ibn Ezra). תבואה is literally "income, revenue", applied mostly in the plural to the product or yield of the soil, comp. Lev. 25.15 f., and elsewhere.

*the yield*] גרש, a hapax legomenon, properly denotes "a thing thrust or put forth", hence produce.

*moons*] i. e. months. The meaning of the verse is that Joseph's land is blessed with all kinds of produce in their seasons.

15. *for the tops of the ancient mountains, etc.*] Similarly Gen. 49.26a. The meaning is "for the precious things (i. e. choice fruits) of the tops of the ancient mountains" (Ibn Ezra), or "for the first-fruits (taking ראש in the sense of ראשית) of the ancient mountains" (Rashi), since the fruits on the mountains, being exposed to the sun, ripen much earlier than the fruits in the plains. Some modern commentators actually emend the text to read ראשית, "the best fruit of the hills," thus obtaining a perfect parallel to the following phrase.

16. *the earth and the fulness thereof*] So Mic. 1.2; Ps. 24.1, etc.  
*that dwell in the bush*] i. e. God, who appeared to Moses in the bush (Ex. 3.2 ff.). The *yod* in שכני is an old case-ending appearing chiefly in poetry (GKC., § 901). Instead of סנה some prefer to read סני, the mountain on which God revealed Himself to Moses.

*let the blessing come*] תבואה is an excrescent form that cannot be explained grammatically; it is therefore taken to stand either for תבואה, the cohortative of the third person, as in Isa. 5.19 (Driver, *Tenses*<sup>3</sup>, p. 51, n. 1), or for תבואה (I Sam. 10.7), comp. the similar form in the corresponding passage of Gen. 49.26 (GKC., § 48d). The "blessing" is implied, but not expressed in Hebrew. This and the following clause seem to be repeated from Gen. 49.26b.

And upon the crown of the head of him that is  
prince among his brethren.

His firstling bullock, majesty is his; 17

And his horns are the horns of the wild-ox;

With them he shall gore the peoples all of them,  
even the ends of the earth;

And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim,

And they are the thousands of Manasseh.

And of Zebulun he said: 18

Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out,

*prince among his brethren*] Literally "one consecrated among his brethren", i. e. set apart as distinguished from the others in nobility, wealth, and influence, hence a prince; so also Lam. 4.7.

17. *His firstling bullock*] A casus pendens, as in 32.4. The allusion is to Ephraim, who, though not really Joseph's first-born, was made so through Jacob's blessing (Gen. 48.13 ff.). Ephraim is pictured here as a majestic bullock with huge horns, goring nations near and far that stand in his way. According to rabbinic commentaries (Sifre, Rashi, etc.), the reference is to Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim.

*wild-ox*] רמ, like the Assyrian *rimu*, was a gigantic species of ox, now extinct (comp. Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*<sup>20</sup>, pp. 146 ff.). A vivid description of its size and strength is found in Job 39.9 ff., and an allusion to its formidable horns occurs also in Ps. 22.22 and 92.11.

*the ends of the earth*] Parallel to "peoples", hence denoting distant nations living at the ends of the earth. Comp. Isa. 52.10; Ps. 2.10 and 22.28, where the same parallelism occurs.

*And they are*] Probably referring to the two horns, which signify Ephraim and Manasseh (RMbN). The Samaritan, Septuagint, Peshitta, and Vulgate omit the conjunctive.

18-19. The blessing of the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar. Comp. Genesis 49.13 ff., on which our passage seems to be based.

18. *in thy going out*] i. e. in thy commercial enterprises along the sea-coast, see Gen. 49.13 (Rashi, RMbN), though, according to Josh. 19.10 ff., Zebulun's territory lay chiefly inland. Another interpretation is "in thy going out to war" (Targum, Ibn Ezra).

And, Issachar, in thy tents.

- 19 They shall call peoples unto the mountain;  
 There shall they offer sacrifices of righteousness;  
 For they shall suck the abundance of the seas,  
 And the hidden treasures of the sand.

*in thy tents*] i. e. in the more sedentary occupation of agriculture. Issachar's fertile territory, according to Josh. 19.17 ff., lay further inland, in Esdraelon under Tabor and Gilboa and down towards the Jordan; comp. the characterization of Issachar in Gen. 49.14 f. "a large-boned ass, couching down between the sheepfolds, for he saw a resting-place that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant under taskwork". Like Zebulun, Issachar appears to have carried on trade with foreign nations.

19. *unto the mountain*] Some take it to refer to mount Moriah or Zion (Targum and Rashi, who construe "peoples" to mean the tribes of Israel, others to Tabor (Herder, Graf), or Carmel (Knobel), or mountains in general (Driver). The sense is that the merchandise of these two northern tribes will be so rare and so much in demand that nations of the world will be invited to the mountain—a prominent place where public fairs are held—for the purpose of trade and commerce (Sforno). Others conjecture that sacrificial feasts were held periodically in the territory of these two tribes and these feasts were frequented by neighboring peoples and utilized by them for purposes of trade and exchange (Graf, Stade, and others).

*sacrifices of righteousness*] i. e. sacrifices prescribed by the law and due to God of right.

*they shall suck the abundance of the seas, etc.*] i. e. they will become affluent through their contact with the sea, both through maritime commerce and the manufacture of glass from sand. Comp. Targum Yerushalmi ad loc.: "For they will settle on the shore of the great sea, and delight themselves with tritons, and catch mussels, and dye purple with their blood the cords of their mantles, and from the sand they will produce mirrors and vessels of glass". According to Josephus (*Jewish War*, II. 10.2), the sand of the Belaeus, which empties into the sea a little south of Akko, was used in the manufacture of glass.

*abundance*] עַבְשׁ (only here) means literally "affluence", being derived from an Aramaic stem denoting "to flow, overflow".

*the hidden treasures of the sand*] Perhaps better rendered super-

And of Gad he said:

20

Blessed be He that enlargeth Gad;

He dwelleth as a lioness,

And teareth the arm, yea, the crown of the head.

And he chose a first part for himself,

21

For there a portion of a ruler was reserved;

lately "the most hidden treasures of the sand" (GKC., § 133h); on the construction with two successive words in the construct state comp. GKC., § 130e. The allusion, as stated above, is either to the manufacture of glass from sand, which is known to have taken place near Akko, or to the production of purple from the murex, mentioned in Pliny's *Natural History*, IX, 60 ff.

20-21. The blessing of Gad. This is in accord with Jacob's blessing in Gen. 49.19, depicting Gad's aggressive and warlike character. Comp. also I Chron. 12.9, where Gadites are styled "mighty men of valour, men trained for war, that could handle shield and spear; whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains".

20. *He that enlargeth*] i. e. God that gave to the tribe of Gad such a large territory on the other side of the Jordan, comp. 3.16 f. and Josh. 13.24 ff.

*as a lioness*] So also Gen. 49.9; Num. 23.24; 24.9.

*teareth the arm, etc.*] Gad is pictured here as a ferocious animal ready to tear in pieces anyone who dares assail it. Owing to its prowess the tribe of Gad was able to maintain its position across the Jordan until the time of Tiglath-pileser (I Chron. 5.26).

21. *he chose, etc.*] Literally "he saw for himself", i. e. spotted or fixed his eyes upon, hence chose; similarly Gen. 22.8; I Sam. 16.1.

*a first part*] Both in the sense of "first to be conquered" and also "best part" of the newly acquired territory.

*there*] i. e. in the district chosen by Gad as his domicile.

*a portion of a ruler was reserved*] חלקה is a portion of land, comp. II Kings 9.21 and 26; חקק, strictly speaking, is "an engraver of laws" (hence חק "something engraved" on a tablet, i. e. law or statute), but in primitive society the man who prescribed the laws was also the supreme commander and ruler of the people, comp. Judg. 5.14, etc.;

And there came the heads of the people,  
 He executed the righteousness of the LORD,  
 And His ordinances with Israel.

קָפִין "covered" (comp. above v. 19), hence "reserved, laid up", the masculine being either in apposition with "ruler" (Hirsch) or else attracted by it, as is not uncommon in Hebrew (GKC., § 146a). According to Jewish tradition (Sifre, Targum, Rashi, comp. also Peshitta and Vulgate), the allusion is to the burial place of Moses; but mount Nebo, on which Moses is said to have died, was in the territory of Reuben (Num. 32.38; Josh. 13.20), not in that of Gad. Hence modern commentators prefer to take it as a reference to the tribe of Gad itself, which is said to have obtained, in the allotment of the conquered territory, a portion worthy of its martial character (comp. Driver ad loc.).

*And there came the heads of the people*] Construing "the heads of the people" as subject, notwithstanding the singular of the predicate (GKC., § 145l). Some render "came as the heads of the people" (comp. Job 29.25), i. e. fought at their head in the conquest of Canaan (Graf, Knobel, Stade, Ehrlich). Another rendering is "and he came with the heads of the people", i. e. the tribe of Gad, after taking possession of its territory across the Jordan, assisted the other tribes of Israel in the conquest of Canaan this side of the Jordan, in accordance with its solemn promise (comp. Num., chapter 32). This interpretation of the phrase is common to most commentators and exegetes, medieval as well as modern. A few refer it to Moses (quoted by Rashi, Sforzo). Some commentators are inclined to think that the masoretic text here is corrupt and should be remedied through conjectural emendation. One of the most plausible conjectures is simply to invert the two troublesome words סָפִין וְהָאֵלֹהִים and read them as one word וְהָאֵלֹהִים סָפִין "and they gathered themselves", similarly the Septuagint, see above v. 5.

*the righteousness of the Lord*] i. e. what is righteous in God's eye, namely the fulfillment of the oath to help the other tribes in the conquest of their respective territories (Rashi, Ibn Ezra). Another interpretation takes this and the following phrase as referring to Moses (see quotation by Rashi, Sforzo).

And of Dan he said:

22

Dan is a lion's whelp,

That leapeth forth from Bashan.

And of Naphtali he said:

23

O Naphtali, satisfied with favour,

And full with the blessing of the LORD:

Possess thou the sea and the south.

22. The blessing of Dan. This tribe is here compared to a lion's whelp that leaps forth from Bashan to attack its foes. In Jacob's blessing in Gen. 49.17 Dan is compared to a serpent in the way biting a passing horse and causing it to throw its rider.

*a lion's whelp*] A figure used of Judah in Gen. 49.9.

*leapeth forth*] The verb *פָּרַח* occurs only here, though found in postbiblical Hebrew, as in Syriac, in the sense of "squirt, sputter, eject with force".

*from Bashan*] See on 3.1. The mention of Bashan shows that the allusion is to Dan of the north, to which that tribe migrated from its earlier home in the south (comp. Judg., chapter 18). Moreover, Dan's chief city in the north was known as Laish, which is a poetical term for "lion" in Hebrew. Whether our verse has reference to a particular incident it is difficult to tell. Some see in it an allusion to attacks made by the Danites of Laish upon neighboring tribes (Stade); others take it to refer to the extraordinary exploits of Samson the Danite.

23. The blessing of Naphtali.

*satisfied with favour, etc.*] An allusion to the extraordinary fertility of Naphtali's territory, which, according to Josh. 19.32 ff., extended from the far north, close under Lebanon, along the western side of the Jordan, to a point a little south of the Lake of Gennesareth. Both upper Galilee ("the hill-country of Naphtali", Josh. 20.7) and lower Galilee (the plains of Gennesareth) were famed for their rich soil and salubrious climate, comp. Josephus, *Jewish War*, III. 3.2 and 10.8; Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, II, 388 and 402; George Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 417 ff. and 446 f.

*possess thou*] *רָשָׁה* is the emphatic form of the imperative in pause (GKC., § 48i); "in addition" is implied.

*the sea*] i. e. Sea of Chinnereth or Lake of Gennesareth, see on 3.17 (so Targum, Rashi, etc.); another rendering is "west" (Samaritan, Ibn Ezra).

*the south*] i. e. the plains around Lake Gennesareth. so called partly



- 24 And of Asher he said:  
 Blessed be Asher above sons;  
 Let him be the favoured of his brethren,  
 And let him dip his foot in oil.
- 25 Iron and brass shall be thy bars;  
 And as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

because they lay south of the plateau which constituted Naphtali's chief territory, partly on account of the warm, quasi-tropical climate prevailing there (Josephus, *Jewish War*, III. 10.8).

24-25. The blessing of Asher. Like Jacob's blessing in Gen. 49.20, it hinges chiefly on the fertility of Asher's soil, which was contiguous to that of Naphtali on the west and resembled it in productiveness.

24. *above sons*] i. e. above other fathers' sons, comp. Judg. 5.24. *the favoured of his brethren*] i. e. beloved by them (Ibn Ezra), similarly Est. 10.3.

*dip his foot in oil*] The Galilean highlands were especially favorable to the growth of the olive tree (comp. Josephus, *Jewish War*, II. 21.2). A proverb in the Midrash (Gen. Rab., chapter 20) reads as follows: "it is easier to raise a legion of olives in Galilee than to bring up a child in Palestine".

25. *Iron and brass shall be thy bars*] Asher's territory, situated far north and close to foreigners, will be well protected and made inaccessible to enemies (RMbN, Driver). Another interpretation is that Asher's territory will be enriched by mountains of iron and brass (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

*bars*] מַעֲלָ (derived from נָעַל "lock, bolt" a door, comp. Judg. 3.23 f.) occurs only here, though it is identical with מַעֲוֹל in Cant. 5.5, etc.

*as thy days, etc.*] This is evidently a prayer to maintain the tribe's vigor in the future as in the past and not to let longevity impair its strength.

*thy strength*] So Septuagint, Peshitta, Targum, Saadya, etc. However, there is no Semitic stem דָּבָא that has this meaning. Hence some render "rest" or "security", basing it on a doubtful Arabic root (Gesenius, Graf, Schultz, Knobel, et al.). Another rendering is "old age", associating perhaps our word with דָּאָב (Vulgate, Targum Yerushalmi, Rashi). The Samaritan has רִבִּיךָ, which, according to Dillmann, underlies also the rendering "strength". Numerous emendations have been suggested, but none of them are satisfactory.

There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun, 26  
 Who rideth upon the heaven as thy help,  
 And in His excellency on the skies.  
 The eternal God is a dwelling-place, 27  
 And underneath are the everlasting arms;  
 And He thrust out the enemy from before thee,  
 And said: 'Destroy.'  
 And Israel dwelleth in safety, 28  
 The fountain of Jacob alone,

## 26-29. CONCLUSION.

After the blessings of the individual tribes the address turns once more to Israel as a whole, as in the introduction (vv. 2-5).

26. *There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun*] So according to the masoretic text, but the versions (Septuagint, Targum, Peshitta, Vulgate), followed by many commentators, render "there is none like unto the God of Israel".

*Jeshurun*] i. e. Israel, see above on v. 5.

*rideth upon the heaven*] The same figure in Ps. 68.34, comp. also Isa. 19.1; Hab. 3.8; Ps. 18.11 ff.

*as thy help*] The preposition is the *essentiae* (GKC., § 119i).

*in His excellency*] Properly in His loftiness or surpassing grandeur, similarly Ps. 68.35.

27. *a dwelling-place*] viz. for His people, similarly Ps. 90.1.

*the everlasting arms*] Namely of God to sustain His people, both in weal and woe. For the figure comp. Isa. 33.2; 51.5; Hos. 11.3, etc.

*said*] viz. unto you.

*Destroy*] viz. the enemy, in order to take possession of his land. The terseness of the phrase gives it force.

28. *in safety*] חֲסִידָה is an adverbial accusative, as in 12.10.

*the fountain of Jacob*] i. e. the successive generations that issued from the stem of Jacob like a stream welling forth incessantly from an inexhaustible source.

*alone*] i. e. securely, away from foes. Isolation was regarded a guarantee of security, comp. Jer. 49.31 and Ps. 4.9, where likewise "alone" is used as a parallel to "safety".

In a land of corn and wine;

Yea, his heavens drop down dew.

29 Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee?

A people saved by the LORD,

The shield of thy help,

And that is the sword of thy excellency!

And thine enemies shall dwindle away before thee;

And thou shalt tread upon their high places.

*in]* לָא here is probably to be taken in the sense of לָע, as so often in the Bible (BDB., p. 41, col.1).

*corn and wine]* See on 7.13.

*Yea]* הָא here is asseverative, as in Ps. 16.6 ff.; 18.49, etc.

*drop down]* See on 32.2.

*dew]* A source of fertility which is of paramount importance in a land like Palestine, where rain is lacking at certain seasons; comp. Gen. 27.28 and Hos. 14.6.

29. *saved]* Properly "victorious", as in Zech. 9.9 and Ps. 33.16.

*The shield of thy help]* The shield is a figure used frequently of God, as the protector of Israel, comp. Gen. 15.1; Ps. 3.4, etc.

*the sword of thy excellency]* i. e. fighting for you against your enemies in order to maintain your superiority over them (Ibn Ezra).

*shall dwindle away]* כָּחַשׁ primarily means "become lean", figuratively "become weak" (just as "become fat" is equivalent to "become strong", comp. Isa. 17.4 and Ps. 78.31), similarly Ps. 18.45; 66.3; 81.16 (Ibn Ezra on Ps. 81.16, Kimhi, Lexicon, s. v., Ehrlich). Another rendering is "come cringing to thee" or "lie to thee", feigning obedience (Driver, et al.).

*tread upon their high places]* i. e. march over them triumphantly.

## CHAPTER 34.

### DEATH AND BURIAL OF MOSES.

According to Ibn Ezra, this chapter was written by Joshua. The Talmud (B. B. 14b) ascribes only the last eight verses to Moses' successor.

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto **34**  
 mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against  
 Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, even  
 Gilead as far as Dan; and all Naphtali, and the land of **2**  
 Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far

1. *And Moses went up, etc.*] As ordered to do in 3.27 and 32.49.

*the plains of Moab*] i. e. the parts of the Arabah which belonged to Moab, more precisely the open plain between the Jordan and the mountain-range of Moab, immediately north of the Dead Sea, now known as *Ghor-es-Seiseban* (comp. Num. 22.1; 26.3, 63; 31.12; 33.48 ff.; 35.1; 36.13; Josh. 13.32). Opposite these plains on the western side of the Jordan were "the plains of Jericho" (see Josh. 4.13; 5.10; II Kings 25.5; Jer. 39.5; 52.8).

*unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah*] Two different designations of the same place, as may be seen from a comparison of 3.27 with 32.49. Very likely Nebo was the specific name of one of the peaks of the mountain-range or ridge Pisgah, on which comp. 3.17. It has been identified with Jebel Neba, eight miles east of the mouth of the Jordan, from the summit of which, especially from the elevation called *Ras Siaghah*, most parts of Palestine are visible in the clear atmosphere of spring. Comp. further Tristram, *Land of Moab*, p. 325; Conder, *Heth and Moab*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 129 f.; G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 562 ff. See also Driver *ad loc.*

*over against Jericho*] Literally "against the face of Jericho", hence to the east of that city.

*all the land*] Which is enumerated below in gradual succession from north to south.

*Gilead*] See on 3.10.

*Dan*] The chief city of northern Dan, formerly known as Leshem or Laish (Josh. 19.47; Judg. 18.29), situated near the foot of mount Hermon. It is known now by the name of *Tell-el-Kadi*.

2. *all Naphtali*] That is the lofty territory north and north-west of the Lake of Gennesareth, some of whose hills may be visible from mount Nebo.

*the land of Ephraim and Manasseh*] This part of Canaan with its promontories Ebal and Gerizim is easily discernible from Pisgah.

*all the land of Judah, etc.*] While the high table-land of Judah is plainly visible, the "hinder sea" or Mediterranean Sea (see on 11.24)

- 3 as the hinder sea; and the South, and the Plain, even the valley of Jericho the city of palm-trees, as far as Zoar.  
 4 And the LORD said unto him: 'This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying: I will give it unto thy seed; I have caused thee to see it  
 5 with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.' So

is concealed by the hills of Judah. No doubt the sea is mentioned here only as the western boundary of Judah.

3. *the South*] i. e. the southern tract of Judah, see on 1.7.

*the Plain*] כָּרָר means primarily "something round", hence also "a round loaf" of bread (as, e. g., I Sam. 2.36), "a round weight, talent" (as Zech. 5.7), and similarly "a round district", as here, applied to the circular basin into which the Jordan valley expands just before the Jordan enters the Dead Sea.

*the valley of Jericho*] This is in apposition to "the Plain". The expression בקעה ירחו, occurring only here, serves to describe exactly the broad cleft (see on 8.7) or depression between mountains in which Jericho lies.

*the city of palm-trees*] So Judg. 1.16; 3.13; II Chron. 28.15. Jericho was famed in ancient times for its extraordinary fertility and especially for its palm-groves, comp. Josephus, *Jewish War*, IV. 8.3; Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, I, 559; G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*<sup>23</sup>, p. 266.

*as far as Zoar*] The exact site of Zoar is doubtful. According to Josephus (*Jewish War*, IV. 8.4), it was situated at the southern end of the Dead Sea, and it has been located accordingly either at Mezraa, at the mouth of Wady Kerak, on the isthmus of the peninsula El-Lisan (Robinson) or in the Ghor eṣ-Ṣafia, at the south-eastern end of the Dead Sea (Wetzstein). In favor of the southern location comp. G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*<sup>23</sup>, pp. 506 f. But in view of our passage and Gen. 13.10; 19.20 ff., placing Zoar in the plain of the Jordan, some are inclined to believe that it lay somewhere at the northern end of the Dead Sea (Tristram, *Moab*, pp. 330 ff.; Conder, *Heh and Moab*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 154 f.).

4. *the land which I swore, etc.*] Exactly as Ex. 33.1. See on 1.8.

*thou shalt not go over thither*] Comp. 1.37; 3.27; 4.21 f.; 32.52.

Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he was 6 buried in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor; and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he 7 died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of 8 Moab thirty days; so the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended. And Joshua the son of Nun was full 9 of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon

5. *according to the word of the Lord*] Literally "according to the mouth of", hence the rabbinical tradition that Moses died by the kiss of God (Rashi and others).

6. *And he was buried*] The Hebrew verbal clause has no definite personal subject (GKC., § 144d), hence it is expressed by the passive in English. The traditional interpretation is that God buried him (Rashi) or that he buried himself (Ibn Ezra), which is more in consonance with the following statement that no man knew of his sepulchre.

*in the valley . . . over against Beth-peor*] The very valley in which Israel was located at that time; see on 3.29.

7. *a hundred and twenty years*] So also 31.2. This is in agreement with Ex. 7.7, according to which Moses was eighty years old at the time of the exodus from Egypt.

*his eye was not dim*] As is natural in old age, comp. Gen. 27.1.

*nor his natural force abated*] Literally "nor had his sap fled". שֶׁמֶח "sap" (so Rashi) only here, though the cognate adjective רֶחֶם "moist, fresh" occurs elsewhere. The suffix appears in its archaic form, in which it was common in some Canaanite dialects.

8. *in the plains of Moab*] See above on v. 1.

*thirty days*] The mourning for Aaron lasted likewise thirty days, comp. Num. 20.29.

9. *was full of the spirit of wisdom*] Similarly Ex. 28.3. חכמה here has reference to practical wisdom and common sense in administration.

*Moses had laid his hands upon him*] In accordance with Num. 27.18 ff.

him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and  
 10 did as the LORD commanded Moses. And there hath not  
 arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the  
 11 LORD knew face to face; in all the signs and the wonders,  
 which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to  
 12 Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; and  
 in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which  
 Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.

*as the Lord commanded Moses]* viz. that they hearken unto Joshua.

10. *like unto Moses]* i. e. of the same eminence and excellence as Moses.

*whom the Lord knew]* i. e. singled out for intimate intercourse, comp. Gen. 18.19.

*face to face]* So Ex. 33.11, or "mouth to mouth", as in Num. 12.8. See on 5.4.

11. *in all]* Rather "in respect to all" or "as regards all", the preposition being the ל of reference (GKC., § 119u and § 143e).

*the signs and the wonders]* So 4.34; 6.22; 7.19; 26.8.

12. *the mighty hand, etc.]* Comp. 4.34.

*terror]* The Targum renders מורא here, as elsewhere in Deuteronomy, by "vision" or "revelation", but this is not due to a different reading מרא, as found in the Samaritan, but rather to the well-known aggadic interpretation that "great terror" implies divine revelation.

*in the sight of all Israel]* Similarly 31.7.

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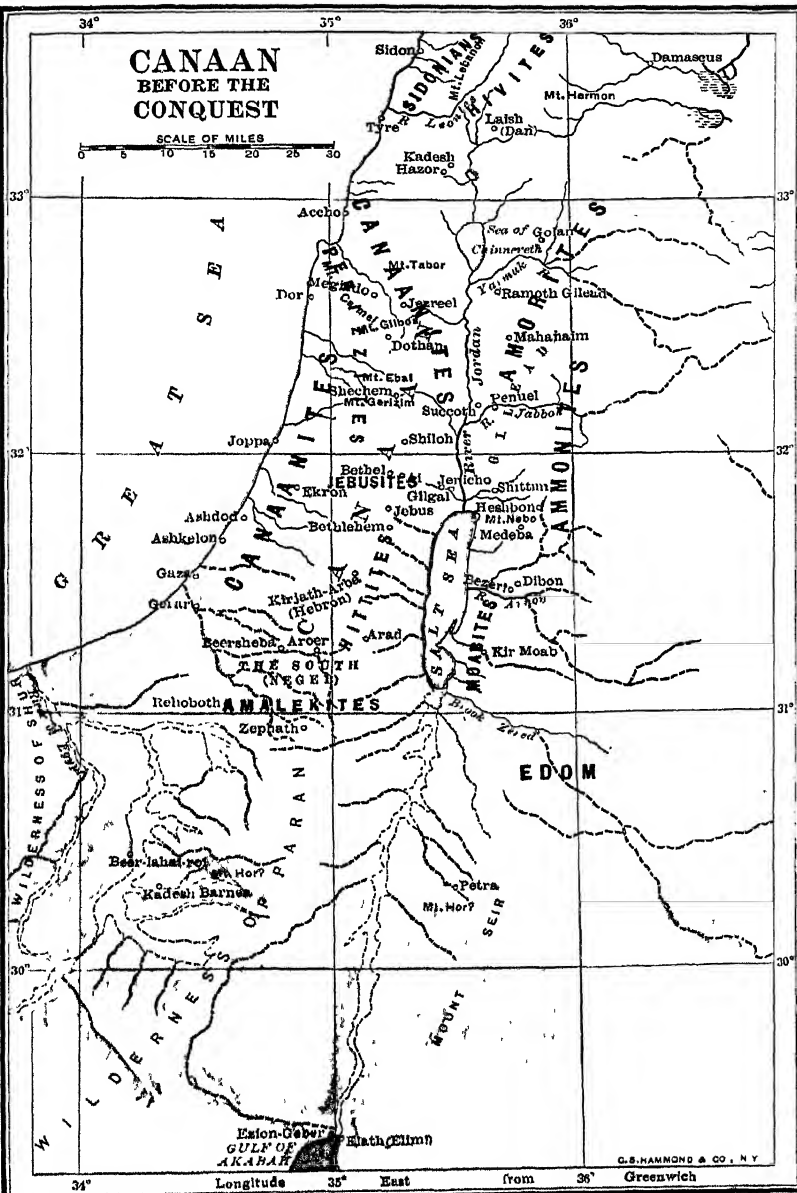
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